THE NATURE OF CHRIST

WILLIAM MARSHALL

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THE NATURE OF CHRIST

Reprinted, with alterations and additions, from

THE VISIBLE GOD, AND OUR RELATION TO HIM
IN CREATION AND REDEMPTION

THE

NATURE OF CHRIST

OR

The Christology of the Scriptures

BY

WILLIAM MARSHALL

'ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ.'
'μορφὴν δούλου.'
—*Phil.* ii. 6, 7.

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"Old men have seldom any advantage of new discoveries, because these are beside a way of thinking they have been long used to; resolved, therefore, if ever I live to years, that I will be impartial to hear the reasons of all pretended discoveries, and receive them, if rational, how long soever I have been used to another way of thinking."
—*Jonathan Edwards.*

PREFACE

SOME time ago we published a book entitled *The Visible God, and our Relation to Him in Creation and Redemption.* The press notices were numerous, kind, and laudatory, as may be seen from the selections given at the end of this volume. The personal testimonies we received were still more laudatory, one of which, from an able and scholarly clergyman of the Anglican Church, may be given as a sample. "MY DEAR SIR,—I have just finished reading your book, entitled *The*

Visible God, etc. I thank God for it, and may I thank you also for the pleasure and, I trust, profit which I have received through your most interesting and valuable work? If I could, I would put a copy of it in the hands of all my friends. I wish every clergyman would read it. I intend handing it to our good Bishop, who is preaching in our church next Sunday. . . . Apologising for the freedom with which I have written, and again thanking you most warmly for your book, I remain, Yours," etc.

The first and eighth chapters of *The Visible God*, etc., contain *a new Christology* —a Christology altogether different from that which has been generally believed by

the Catholic Church since the days of the apostolic Fathers,—a Christology which (after long and careful study of the Scriptures and the writings of the ablest theologians, ancient and modern) we believe to be not only new but true and of the utmost practical importance to both the Church and the world.

Some of our wisest friends who have gladly and gratefully accepted our new Christology, and found that it has very largely made the Bible a new book to them, have expressed their regret that it has been put into a large volume, which may possibly be purchased and read by only a comparatively small number of persons. Recognising the force of what they

have said, we have extracted the two chapters to which we have referred, *The Visible God as Creator*, and *The Visible God as Redeemer*, and given them this separate publication, altering and adding thereto as seemed to be necessary. It would not have been difficult to have greatly expanded the additional matter, and the temptation to do so was strong, but we refused to yield to it in the belief that a short and suggestive treatment of our great subject would prove both more interesting and more instructive to thoughtful readers than a longer and more exhaustive treatise could have been. Not only so, but having in view not theologians merely or scholars only, but devout

students of the Scriptures and earnest seekers for God, we have written as simply and briefly as we could. Praying and trusting that under the Divine blessing our words may be a golden key to many by which they may unlock all the Scriptures which speak of the nature of Christ, we send forth this volume.

W. M.

Clavadel, Davos Platz,
Switzerland,
February, 1896.

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CHAPTER I

ANCIENT DOGMA AND MODERN BELIEF

IN the early Christian ages the subject which probably received the largest amount of consideration from theologians and preachers was the nature of the Christ. The views they held were very varied, though they frequently differed one from another only in small and subtle distinctions. But this we shall venture to say, that while the opinions of some approached more or less near to what we believe to be the right conception of Christ's nature, not one of them—so far as we know—really reached it. They all fell short of a correct apprehension of the truth in relation to

the Person of the Son of God as revealed in Scripture. If space had allowed, we should like to prove this assertion by quoting a large number of their declarations regarding this all-important matter, especially those of the ablest thinkers. If the reader wishes to know what they are, he will find them fully stated in Dr. Dorner's great work on *The Person of the Christ.*

The early General Councils of the Catholic Church earnestly considered and sometimes fiercely debated the great question, and then passed dogmatic decisions regarding it by majorities more or less large. And from then until now these decisions have been almost universally accepted by Christian people as a settlement of the matter. Whether they have acted wisely in so doing is open to doubt, for majorities are not always right; indeed, as history abundantly testifies, they have very often been wrong. The apostles of our Lord were Divinely-inspired men,

and therefore all their declarations regarding the Person of Christ are in perfect harmony ; but the "Fathers" of the early Church were neither apostles nor inspired, and were not infallibly led into the knowledge of the truth any more than are Christian teachers and preachers of the present day. The peculiar reverence frequently given to their writings and opinions, especially by Roman Catholic and Anglican priests, is not grounded in reason ; on the contrary, no intelligent person, we imagine, who thoughtfully considers the matter, will hesitate to agree with Dr. Dorner when he says, in his work on *The Person of the Christ* (vol. i., p. 92): "There is undeniably a very significant distinction between the written productions of the apostolic age and those of the age immediately following ; and it is hardly possible to represent the relation of the one to the other more erroneously than when the apostolic age is called, in a dogmatical respect, a germ and beginning

whilst the age of the apostolic Fathers is regarded as the fruitful unfolding of that germ. If we try each of these ages by the standard of its Christian knowledge, we shall find, beyond all doubt, a serious falling off in the age following that of the apostles. What was in the earlier age the actual spiritual possession of the distinguished men whom the Lord chose, trained, and equipped, was far from being all retained by the succeeding age, much less was a higher stage of Christian knowledge attained." If this be true of the first age after the apostles, is it not likely to be equally —or perhaps still more—true of the ages after that, when the bright sunshine of gospel truth was being progressively overclouded by the pride and ambition, the ritual and superstition of a world-corrupted Church? Recognising the likelihood of this, we should be careful not to lay too much stress on the opinions of great theologians or on the decisions of councils.

In *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (p. 88), Canon Gore says, "The period of the Ecumenical Councils, like the period of Gnosticism, seemed to Christian theologians who lived in it a scene of wildest confusion." And he supports this statement by quoting the words of St. Hilary, who said, when speaking of the authorities in the Church: "We determine creeds by the year, or by the month; and then we change our determination; and then we prohibit our changes; and then we anathematize our prohibitions." There is no wonder that the Canon was able to add, concerning this period, "The student of its ecclesiastical history to-day appears to himself to be fighting his way through a wild sea of conflicting determinations and shifting views." This is just as true of Christian doctrine as of ecclesiastical polity, and pre-eminently so of the great doctrine of the nature of Christ. And of this doctrine, as of others, Canon Gore speaks truly

when he says (p. 107): "The dogmatic decisions of the Church, like other good things, have been greatly misused—and why? By being treated as sources of our positive information about Christ, practically overriding the gospel picture." Unfortunately, though no doubt unconsciously, the Canon himself has been too deeply influenced by the opinions of the Fathers and their decisions in councils, fairly and critically to examine them in the pure white light of Scripture declarations. Hence his able work, from which we have just quoted, and from which we may frequently quote again in the following pages, is little more than a learned and elaborate restatement and eloquent recommendation of the old dogmatic creeds. This is how he speaks of them on page 89: "The period of the Ecumenical Councils seemed to Christian theologians who lived in it a scene of wild confusion. . . . Yet out of it, by some process which at lowest must have been 'the

survival of the fittest,' emerged a framework of dogmatic statement *which is a very synonym for unshaken consistency and balanced strength*" (the italics are ours). Much which he has written, and which many others have written, we will dare to controvert—always, we trust, with the courtesy of a true humility, but always also with the free outspokenness of deep conviction and that unshrinking courage which a genuine love of truth ought ever to inspire. We ask our readers to unite with us in testing anew, by the declarations of Scripture, the current beliefs of the Catholic Church regarding the nature of Christ, that thereby these beliefs may either be confirmed and established, or modified and altered, until they are brought into perfect unity and concord with the written revelation of God. While "it is the function of the Church to teach, it is the function of the Word to prove"; and therefore it is well from time to time to test accepted doctrines by that

Word out of which more and more light is constantly breaking forth—especially those doctrines which seem to be either mystical or confused. And most of all the doctrine of the Person of Christ ought thus to be dealt with, for rightly to apprehend His nature is to reach the very core of revealed truth, while to misapprehend that great centre is likely to lead to mistakes all round its circumference. Did not Jesus say, 'I *am* the truth'? (John xiv. 7).

What then are the ideas concerning Christ's nature which were first entertained by some of the apostolic "Fathers," then embodied in creeds formulated by the early councils, and ever since generally believed and taught by the Catholic Church? Broadly and briefly, they may thus be stated:

1. That the Son, as the Father's Organ or Agent, created all things *as God.*

2. That all His Old Testament appearances or Theophanies *were apparitional*; or, if not apparitional, that He made use of the intermediate agency of a created angel to represent Himself.

3. That the Incarnation was His descent as God into humanity; or, in other words, that the Divine Son *became Man.*

4. That the Humanity of the Incarnate Christ *was perfect.*

The question we have now to ask is this: *Are these teachings of the Church in harmony with the declarations of the Scriptures?* And we put this question all the more boldly when we find Canon Gore frankly making this confession (p. 165): "In asking men to fall back on the Church's formal decisions about our Lord's Person, and upon the text of the New Testament, and to reconsider on this basis the moral and human

meaning of the Incarnation, *we are not asking them to re-open a problem which can be represented as either dogmatically decided or fairly considered*" (the italics are ours). And again, on pages 80, 81, he writes: "There are definitions which of course suggest themselves for our guidance — ancient, famous, venerable — contained in the Catholic creeds and dogmatic decisions of the General Councils about the Person of Jesus Christ. These definitions consist in substance of four propositions:

"1. That as Son of God, Jesus Christ is very God, of one substance with the Father.

"2. That as Son of Man, He is perfect Man, in the completeness of human faculties and sympathies.

"3. That though both God and Man, He is yet one Person; namely, the Son of God, who has taken manhood into Himself.

"4. That in this Incarnation the manhood, though it is truly assumed into the Divine Person, still remains none the less truly human; so that Jesus Christ is of one substance with us men in respect of His manhood, as He is with the Father in respect of His Godhead."

Through the whole of his book the Canon is altogether loyal to these propositions, and amplifies and defends them with remarkable ability and power. But we venture to predict that he has not spoken the final word on that great central and supremely-important theme—'He who was manifested in the flesh' (1 Tim. iii. 16). The candid admission of the fair-minded Canon—that "the moral and human meaning of the Incarnation is a problem which cannot be represented as either dogmatically decided or even fairly considered"—ought to be kept in remembrance by every student of theology and Scripture who may read his

words; that while gladly and gratefully accepting the assistance which former students can give him, he may still keep all the windows of his soul open to the sunshine of Divine truth everlastingly beaming from the firmament of the sacred Word.

CHAPTER II

THE NATURE OF GOD—THE FATHER

THAT we may clearly apprehend what the Scriptures tell us about the nature of the Son of God, let us try first of all to understand with some measure of fulness what they say about the nature of the Father.

In the beginning God was. He is Eternal. And in that beginning which never began He was alone. The universe had not been created, and no being, creature, or thing brought into existence. As Jacob Behmen, the wise and far-sighted German philosopher and mystic, truly and beautifully remarks, "The Great Spirit dwelt

alone, in the uncreated Heaven of His own glory." But though alone, He was not solitary, for there is a Trinity in the Unity of the Divine Being. The Triune Godhead is everywhere declared in the sacred writings, especially in the New Testament, and is usually represented by the words Father, Son, and Spirit. Proof texts need not be quoted, for every intelligent reader of the Bible must be familiar with them.

What then is the nature of the Father? Let the Scriptures give the reply: 'God is Spirit' (John iv. 24). 'God is Light' (1 John i. 5). 'God is Love' (1 John iv. 8, 16). 'The King, eternal, incorruptible, invisible, the only God' (1 Tim. i. 17). 'Who only hath immortality, dwelling in light unapproachable; whom no man hath seen nor can see' (1 Tim. vi. 16). Thoughtfully meditate for a little on these great and glorious declarations; they are sublimely grand, and charmingly suggestive.

'God is Love,'—*what does this* SIGNIFY? It signifies that *He is nothing else than Love.* Love is the essence of His nature, and the element of His life. It has often been supposed that love is only one of the many attributes of Deity, but that is a mistake. All the Divine attributes are the attributes of love, just as the sevenfold hues of the rainbow are the elements of pure white light. As light contains all colours, so love enfolds all attributes. We are never told in Scripture that God is Mercy, or Righteousness, or Holiness, or Justice, or Truth; but we are told once and again that He is Love. This is the All of God, and what are called His attributes or perfections are just the goings forth of His love towards His children *in different moral conditions.* For instance, What is Mercy? but love stooping down to the sinful and miserable to save and uplift them. What is Righteousness? but love declaring and establishing the right.

What is Holiness? but love looking upon moral impurity with loathing and disapproval. What is Anger? but the holy indignation of love, exposing, rebuking, and destroying sin which it hates and cannot tolerate. 'Our God is a consuming fire' just because He is Love. The perfect love seeks to burn up all that is contrary to its own nature, and which—by opposing its redemptive purpose and degrading and destroying humanity — if left alone, would turn the universe into a hell.

'God is Love,'—*what does this* IMPLY? It implies a material and moral creation, in which the Divine Lover can manifest His love, and make the objects of His affection the happy partakers of His own nature, character, and joy. Love in the bosom of God is the most fervent affection and active principle in the universe: it can neither be passive nor inactive, but must manifest itself. It is not compelled by any

necessity from without, but impelled by its own nature from within. It longs for objects upon whom it may lavish its fond and tender endearments—objects capable not only of receiving, but also of reciprocating its gracious and kindly manifestations; for love can never be satisfied with anything but love.

God is the Great Father — and what does FATHERHOOD *imply?* First of all, it certainly implies *Motherhood.* With profoundest reverence and awe we approach this Holy of Holies in the Divine nature, meanwhile charging our soul to clothe itself with humility, and let its words be few. Indeed, instead of venturing to express our own thoughts on such a subject, we prefer to make use of the words of another—the beautiful and suggestive words of a living saint and seer who has been led by the Divine Spirit—the great Enlightener of the human mind and the supreme Interpreter of spiritual truth—into the

knowledge and experience of "the deep things of God." In his *Morgenröthe*, Dr. John Pulsford has written some wonderful things about the Divine Motherhood. Take two or three brief quotations, which are worthy of careful consideration. On pages 9 and 66 he says: "God is not an Abstraction. Abstractions create nothing, generate nothing. God is the Living, Supreme Personality—the possibility of endless propagations of personality. He is the Infinite Father-Mother, or all-generating Source. The duplex nature of humanity points back to the duplex nature of the Godhead, from which indeed proceeds the third distinction—the effluence, or procession, of His own duplex life, carrying in its bosom the generative law and power of all possible creations. In the open mystery of the universe is presented, as in a mirror, the hidden mystery of God. . . . The honour due to the *finite* father and mother assumes that the lines

of their descent meet in the bosom of the *Infinite*, of whom they are representative. Could they be mothers at all, or fathers at all, except from Him? We will honour our father and mother in God; for not in them, but in Him, we find both the original of their distinction and the perfectness of their unity. In glorifying and lovingly honouring Eternal Fatherhood and Motherhood in Him, we are open to the circulation in us of His life; and it shall surely go well with us all the days of His eternity and our eternity." And on page 67: "If you deny womanly and motherly attributes to God, you rob Him of His most holy and tender attractions, and inevitably you will have to pay the penalty of your mistake in the dryness and coldness of your own religious life. . . . Ascribe to Him His whole nature, as reflected by dual humanity, and you will have the key to all knowledge, the law of your own complete de-

velopment, and insight into the reasonableness of your hope of fulness of joy."

But the Divine Fatherhood implies, not only Divine Motherhood, but also a *Divine family life.* The fatherly and motherly heart of God longed for children. It could never be satisfied by mere creatures such as birds and beasts, but only by Moral Intelligences who could receive His love and freely give Him back their own in return. They must be able with willing minds and joyful hearts and adoring spirits to worship Him as their God and lovingly obey Him as their Father. It was for them that the universe was created. Every orb in space, we may venture to believe, is designed for habitation. The worlds are the many mansions of the infinite palace-home of the Divine Family. That family is already very large, and will, we doubt not, be continually increased—through creation and multiplication—for evermore. The universe

is boundless, and the love of God inexhaustible. There will eternally be abundance of room in the heart and home of the Divine Father for all His children; ay! and the larger His family becomes, the greater will be His joy, because He is Love.

The God of Love is *invisible.* He is so, by the very necessity of His own nature. Being the Infinite One, He can never be visible to finite creatures. 'No man hath seen God at any time' (John i. 18). 'Whom no man hath seen, *nor can see*' (1 Tim. vi. 16). This is the uniform teaching of Divine revelation concerning the Father, and all its declarations are emphatic and unlimited. And an enlightened reason has no difficulty in accepting them, for how can the Infinite Spirit be ever cognisable by the bodily sight of any created being either in time or eternity, or in any world in the universe? 'He dwelleth in the light, which no

man can approach unto' (1 Tim. vi. 16). If God the Father could ever be seen, as God the Son is seen, then there would be *two Gods*, and both in *finite forms*, for the Infinite as such is invisible.

And because He is infinite and invisible, He is also *The Great Unknown.* No created being in the universe has ever seen God, or directly known Him. Did not Jesus say, 'Neither doth *any* know the Father, save the Son'? (Matt. xi. 27). Let these sublime truths concerning the nature of the Father be kept in view, while we now proceed to consider the nature of the Son.

CHAPTER III

THE NATURE OF THE PRE-INCARNATE SON

WHAT is the nature of the Son? This is a vastly important question, to which we earnestly ask the best attention of our readers. Here also let the Scriptures give the reply. They tell us that the Son and the Son only has *seen* and *known* the Father. Jesus said, 'Not that any man hath seen the Father, save He who is from God, *He hath seen the Father*' (John vi. 46). And again "Neither doth any know the Father, save the Son' (Matt. xi. 27). '*I know Him*, because I am from Him and He sent Me' (John vii. 29). Now if He only has seen and known the Father,

what does that imply? It surely implies, that His nature is Divine. Only God can *see* God, and no one but the Divine Son could *know* the Father. 'No *man* knoweth the Father,' and what is true of man must also be true of every created being. It is absolutely impossible for a finite creature to see the Infinite and the Invisible God, and equally impossible for him to know immediately and fully the Divine and Eternal Father. Said Jesus Christ, 'I and My Father are One' (John x. 30). This *oneness* must consist of essential Being and not of mere purpose and desire, as some would have us believe, for no one *less* than Divine would have dared to speak of *oneness* with God, and even to put himself before Him. The very form of the language used by Christ is an assertion of equality with the Father. No *created* being, however great, could truthfully declare that he had seen the Invisible One, and known the Eternal and the Infinite.

It requires a Divine Being to see and know a Being who is Divine. And no one else *could reveal Him.* But the Son is the Revealer of the Father. Did He not say, 'Neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to *reveal* Him'? (Matt. xi. 27). 'No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath *declared* Him' (John i. 18).

And now the important question arises, *How did the Son reveal and declare the Father*? Was it only *by the works of His hands*? Was the material Creation an adequate Revelation of God? It was brought into existence by the Son, for 'all things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made' (John i. 3). And it is a wonderfully beautiful manifestation of God, faithfully displaying His nature, character, and purpose

up to the point He intends that it should. Is He wise?—it reveals His wisdom. Is He beneficent?—it displays His goodness. Is He just?—it exhibits and executes His justice. Is He altogether lovely?—it manifests His loveliness.

> "All things Thy presence, Lord, declare,
> Through earth and heaven above;
> The vail which makes the world so fair
> Is woven by Thy love."

His graciousness is everywhere visible to the seeing eye and the observant mind, in all the laws and operations of Nature. It shines in the sun, and sparkles like a gem on the bosom of every star. It blooms in the flowers, and glitters in every dewdrop. It breathes in the woods and forests, and whispers in every breeze. We hear it in all the voices of Nature—in the murmur of the rill, in the melody of the river, in the anthem of the sea, and in the song of every

bird. We see it in all the splendours by which we are everywhere overshadowed and surrounded —in the glories of the firmament by day and by night, in the ever-changing scenery of the clouds, and in the marvellous panorama of the circling seasons of the year. But mark this: no human being has ever been able thus to interpret Nature who has not been Divinely enlightened by the written Revelation of God. In our work on *Nature as a Book of Symbols* (pp. 76–78), we have said: "It is only the spiritually-minded man who can read and interpret Nature spiritually, and even he is able to do so only in proportion as he studies her in the light of the Bible, and regards her as a great book of symbols revealing the mind and will of God. He learns to see in all her changeful phenomena and changeless laws far higher beauties and greater marvels than are visible to the artist and poet, the philosopher and man of science. They have only physical

sight and intellectual *out*sight, but he obtains, and with ever-increasing *in*sight, the profoundest apprehension of created things. They see only the varied forms of matter, and recognise the hidden forces by which these forms are fashioned and governed, but he passes through the outer sphere of phenomena and the inner sphere of law into the inmost sphere of life, where he finds —through spiritual knowledge and a reasonable faith—that all Nature's laws are gathered up into the hand of the Eternal Lawgiver and into the unity of an unchanging love." All this is true, as any intelligent and thoughtful person will readily recognise who considers the matter. Men like Tyndal, Darwin, and Huxley, who foolishly refuse to become believing and devout students of Scripture and humble disciples of Jesus Christ —the wisest of all the Teachers of mankind— do not find in Nature a revelation of God, but only a great, grinding, material machine, fashioned

and governed by laws of necessity. No nation of mankind without the Bible has ever learnt from the volume of Creation to know and love the Father. Even the ancient Greeks, with all their material civilization and mental culture, recognised in Nature—not a manifestation of the only living and true God, but—only a Pantheon of deities—deities of their own imagining. It was reserved for Bible-reading and God-inspired Hebrew psalmists to exclaim: 'The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handy-work.' . . . 'All Thy works praise Thee, O God.' . . . 'How great are Thy works, O Lord! Thy thoughts are very deep. A brutish man knoweth not, neither doth a fool understand.' . . . 'Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through Thy work: I will triumph in the works of Thy hands.' But even though humanity had never been corrupted by the degrading, destructive, and damning power of Moral

Evil, and had been able to learn from Nature all that she was capable of teaching regarding God, yet she could never have become to men an adequate and satisfying revelation of the Father. And why? *Because no person's work can ever fully and truly reveal the person.* An artist can never be thoroughly known from his pictures, nor a sculptor from his statues, nor an architect from the buildings he designs. And if this be true of men, it must be still more true of God. And if the *works* of God cannot fully reveal Him, *neither can His Word.* The written Word of God reveals more of God than His works, because 'He has magnified His Word above all His name,' but *the written Word* is a revelation of *the Personal Word*, from whom it derives all its significance and force. The Son of God is the All in All of the Scriptures, and He only is the full, adequate and perfectly satisfying revelation of God. This is true now, and

was equally true in the beginning of human history. No *author*, either human or Divine, can ever be rightly known by his *writings*. To the first members of the human family, as much as to ourselves, *a Personal Revelation of God was an absolute necessity*, without whom the Father must for ever have remained The Great Unknown.

How was this Personal Revelation then to be made? How could the Son make known the Father? We here stand face to face with a question of the very greatest importance—a question to which we beg our readers to give for a little their most earnest thought and undivided attention. Again, then, we inquire, *How was the Son to reveal the Father?* And we answer, *In no other way than by Personal and visible manifestation.* If the Son only could know the Father, it was also true that only the Father could know the Son. Jesus said so. Mark His words, 'No

one knoweth who the Son is, save the Father'; therefore no mere creature could ever know either Father or Son as Persons of the Godhead. *Hence it was not possible for the Son* AS GOD *to manifest the Father.* How could a purely Divine Being "reveal" or "declare" a Being who is purely Divine? The Son as God was just as invisible as the Father, and therefore could not make Him known to finite creatures. This is a truth to which the attention of Christians has never been sufficiently called, has never, indeed, so far as we know, been called at all; and yet there is no truth of greater speculative interest and practical value revealed in the Bible. *Mediatorship* between the Infinite Father and His finite children was an absolute necessity—a necessity which did not arise either out of sin or the need of redemption, but out of creaturehood itself. Calvin was right when he said in his *Institutes* that "even if man had remained free

from all sin, he was of too humble a condition to penetrate to God without a Mediator." And because a Mediator stands between two parties, and is the Representative of both, He must necessarily partake of the nature of each. 'There is one God, and one Mediator also between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus' (1 Tim. ii. 5). These words are in the New Testament, but they might just as well have been put into the Old, if only the Jewish people had as clearly apprehended the Mediatorship of their Jehovah as did the Apostle Paul of his Saviour and Lord. *The Creator was Mediator*, and as such would have been Mediator eternally but for the entrance of sin into the world. Therefore, before creation and for mediatorial ends, the Divine Son became the Divine Man to represent God to men and men to God. It was just here (because of their preconceived notion that He never became Man till He be-

came Incarnate) that the apostolic Fathers failed to grasp the truth, and that theologians for the same reason have failed in like manner. In proof of this, take two or three notable examples. The late Dr. Dale, of Birmingham, in his admirable work on *Christian Doctrine* (pp. 157–9) says: "The Eternal Father would have remained for ever unknown, but for the Word that was in the beginning with God and was God." . . . "We need a God who is 'afar off,' One infinitely greater than ourselves, and belonging to other realms of life." "But we also need a God who is 'nigh at hand.'" . . . "A remote God, reigning in inaccessible heights of majesty and glory, does not satisfy us. He is too far away for us to be sure of His sympathy, compassion, and grace." . . . "Christ not only reveals the Infinite and the Eternal God (who in His infinitude and eternity transcends the universe and remains for ever above

and apart from it), but He accepts human limitations," etc. . . . "Now, we *know* that God is a God 'nigh at hand,' as well as a God 'afar off.'" These are admirable statements, and all of them are gloriously true; but the much-beloved and greatly-lamented writer restricted their application to the Incarnate Christ. Was it necessary thus to restrict them? Are they not equally applicable to the Creator of man as to the Saviour of sinners? Had sinless humanity no craving for a God nigh at hand to reveal the God afar off? Was it necessary that man should become a fallen and guilty creature, and that the Son of God should be "made of a woman" and put "under the law," in order that the eternally invisible and far-off God should be brought nigh unto men? Surely not; and if not, then how could God the Father be "revealed," "declared," and manifested by the Son, if the Son also was God *and nothing else*? The Infinite and Invisible

Father could never have been revealed and manifested unto men by an equally Divine and Invisible Son. Mediatorship was necessary, *and mediatorship implies both form and visibility.* Dr. Fairbairn also, in his splendid and masterly work, *Christ in Modern Theology*, has thus written on pages 475–7: "If God is to become the real Father of man, and man the real son of God, then all the energies, and loves, and ideals of the *Unseen Paternity* must be incarnated and organized *in a visible Sonship*, that they may become creative of a mankind which shall realize the filial ideal." . . . "If God's Fatherhood is to be a reality to man, he must see it as it is, know it by experience, by handling it, and by being handled by it. And the only way in which it can thus come is *in the form of humanity.*" . . . "*The Incarnation* may be described as the most illustrious example of the supremacy of God's moral over His physical attributes, and of the

relation they hold to the healing and happiness of man. As such it is of all acts the act that most becomes Him, and so the one we can least conceive as accidental. And therefore, though its special form may be affected by the fact of sin, yet *it were mere impertinence to imagine that but for the accident of sin the universe would have been deprived of its most invincible evidence of grace*"—(the italics are ours). Now these are true, beautiful, and far-reaching statements, the full significance of which Dr. Fairbairn himself does not seem to apprehend. If God, as he argues, must have been incarnated "*in a visible Sonship*"—if that visible Sonship must have come "*in the form of humanity*"—if that visible Sonship in human form must have come "*apart from the accident of sin*," then we earnestly and urgently inquire: If sin had never existed, *when* was it most likely that the Son of the Father would become the God-Man—the Visible God? Surely,

before man was created, and not after the human race had existed for hundreds or thousands of years upon the earth, and been developed in large measure out of the natural into the spiritual condition! *Apart from sin*, what reason can be imagined for *a flesh-and-blood* Incarnation of the Divine Son, late in time and after humanity had far advanced on its upward and heavenly way, and become more or less 'like unto the angels'? There is no ground for such a conception, either in reason or in revelation. One or two of the apostolic Fathers originated it, but St. Augustine opposed it, and since then it has not been held by many notable theologians until our own day, and we wonder much that they have been able to revive it. Referring to the idea of an Incarnation of the Son of God, even though sin had never existed—an idea recently advocated not only by Principal Fairbairn, but also by Canon Gore, Dr. Oosterzee, and others—

Dr. Denney, in his *Studies in Theology*, most truly says on page 101: "Scripture never gives the faintest hint of any opening for the mind in this direction." And Dr. Denney is right. But *why* does Scripture never give a hint of such an Incarnation? Is not this the reason, that the *Lord* God—the Divine Son—was already Man from the beginning? Truly "it were mere impertinence to imagine that but for the accident of sin the universe would have been deprived of its most invincible evidence of grace"; but it was not so deprived, for the *Creator* of things was at once God and Man — the Visible God. In *The Image of Christ* (p. 76), Dr. Oosterzee says, "Even though man had not fallen, he must have been gradually trained and led up to a higher perfection. And why should we not suppose that among the means which the highest love would have used to this end, even the send-

ing of His Son in human flesh would have had its place?" This is an extraordinary guess—a splendid speculation! The writer clearly apprehended that if man was to be "led up to a higher perfection," he must have a Divine-Human Teacher and Exemplar; but he failed to recognise the fact that that great necessity had already been gloriously met in the Creator. Surely the *first* man required to be "gradually trained and led up to a higher perfection," as much as his posterity in after-time; and if so, the Divine Man must have been there before him to give the training and leading which were necessary. It is not God's method to be behindhand in meeting the requirements of His children; He "goes before them with the blessings of His goodness." It is true that a Divine Humanity was a necessity to creaturely culture and development, satisfaction and perfecting, but it is not true that angels and men required to wait for the Divine

Man until the Word was made flesh. *The Creator was God-Man—the Primal Man.* His humanity is clearly proved by two facts: *first*, that He made man 'in His own image and *likeness*'—a word that is never used in Scripture about anything which is not *visible*;—and *second*, that all through the Old Testament dispensations He frequently appeared to men as a Man, and never as anything else.

Now, *what do the Old Testament Scriptures testify concerning the so-called Theophanies*, or, as we prefer to call them, the appearances, of the Divine Man? These were exceedingly numerous, but we shall mention only the chief, and will do so in the words of Scripture itself, leaving the reader to judge whether they refer to appearances which were merely apparitional and mysterious or real and human. Let him frequently pause to ponder the wonderful words, and most of all those we have put in italics. Let him also remember

this, that the language of Scripture is not loose and indefinite, but most precise and accurate. For instance, we read that 'the word of the Lord came unto Abraham *in a vision*' (Gen. xv. 1), that 'the angel of the Lord *called unto him out of heaven*' (Gen. xxii. 11, 15), and that '*the Lord appeared unto him by the oaks of Mamre*' (Gen. xviii. 1). We learn from these examples that God in His Word says exactly what He means, and is most careful and specific in the language He uses. With this conviction firmly rooted in the mind, let us read what we are told about the appearances of the God-Man. 'They heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and the man and his wife *hid* themselves from the *presence* of the Lord God *amongst the trees of the garden*' (Gen. iii. 8). 'And the Lord God *made coats of skins, and clothed them*' (Gen. iii. 21). 'Cain said unto the Lord, *from Thy face shall I be hid*' (Gen.

iv. 14). 'Now the Lord *said* unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country,' etc. (Gen. xii. 1). 'The God of glory *appeared* unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, and *said* unto him, Get thee out of thy land,' etc. (Acts vii. 2, 3). 'And the Lord *appeared* unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land,' etc. (Gen. xii. 7). 'And the angel of the Lord found her (Hagar) *by a fountain of water in the wilderness, in the way to Shur.*' . . . 'And she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou art a God that seeth: for she said, *Have I even here looked after Him that seeth me?*' (Gen. xvi. 7, 13). 'When Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord *appeared* to Abram, and said unto him, I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be thou perfect.' . . . 'And Abram *fell on his face*, and God *talked* with him' (Gen. xvii. 1, 3). '*And He left off talking with*

him, and God *went up from Abraham*' (Gen. xvii. 22). 'And the Lord *appeared* unto him (Abraham) *by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day*; and he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, lo, *three men* (the *Lord* and two *angels*) stood over against him; and when he saw them he ran *to meet them* from the tent door, and bowed himself to the earth, and said, *My Lord* (he knew Him), if now I have found favour in Thy sight, pass not away, I pray Thee, from Thy servant: let now a little water be fetched, and *wash your feet*, and *rest* yourselves *under the tree*: and I will fetch a morsel of *bread*, and comfort ye your heart; after that ye shall *pass on*: forasmuch as ye are come to your servant. And they said, *So do as thou hast said*.' . . . And the men turned from thence and went toward Sodom; but Abraham *stood yet before the Lord*.' . . . 'And the Lord *went His*

way, as soon as He had left *communing* with Abraham' (Gen. xviii. 1–5, 22, 33). 'And the Lord *appeared* unto him (Isaac), and said, Go not down into Egypt,' etc. (Gen. xxvi. 2). '*There wrestled a man with him* (Jacob) until the breaking of the day.' . . . 'And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, for, said he, *I have seen God face to face*, and my life is preserved' (Gen. xxxii. 24, 30). 'And God *appeared* unto him *again*, when he came from Padan-aram, and blessed him.' . . . 'And God *went up from him*, in the *place* where He spake with him.' . . . 'And Jacob called the name of the *place* where God spake with him, Bethel' (Gen. xxxv. 9, 13, 15). 'The angel of the Lord appeared unto him (Moses) in a flame of fire *out of the midst of a bush*.' . . . 'And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him *out of the midst of the bush*, and said, Moses, Moses.' . . . '*And Moses*

hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God' (Exod. iii. 2, 4, 6). '*Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb*, and thou shalt smite the rock,' etc. (Exod. xvii. 6). 'Then went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: and *they saw the God of Israel*' . . . 'they *beheld God*, and did eat and drink' (Exod. xxiv. 9–11). 'And the Lord spake unto Moses *face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend*' (Exod. xxxiii. 11). 'Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto Mount Sinai' . . . 'and the Lord *descended in the cloud, and stood with him there*, and proclaimed the name of the Lord' (Exod. xxxiv. 4, 5). 'And the Lord spake suddenly unto Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, Come out ye three unto the tent of meeting. And they three came out. *And the Lord came down in a pillar of cloud, and stood at the door of the tent*, and called Aaron and Miriam: and they

both came forth. And He said, Hear now My words: If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make Myself known unto him *in a vision*, I will speak with him *in a dream*. My servant Moses is *not so*; he is faithful in all Mine house: *with him will I speak mouth to mouth*, even *manifestly*, and not in dark speeches; *and the form of the Lord shall he behold*: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against My servant?' (Num. xii. 4-8). 'It came to pass when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, *there stood a man over against him* with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said, Art thou for us or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? And the captain of the Lord's host said unto

Joshua, *Put off thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy.* And Joshua did so' (Josh. v. 13–15). 'The angel of the Lord *appeared* unto him (Gideon), and said unto him, The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.' . . . 'And Gideon went in, and made ready a kid, and unleavened cakes,' etc. . . . '*and brought it out unto him under the oak, and presented it.*' . . . 'Then the angel of the Lord *put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the cakes*; and there went up *fire* out of the rock, and *consumed* the flesh and the cakes, and the angel of the Lord *departed out of his sight.* And Gideon saw that he was the angel of the Lord; and he said, Alas, O Lord God! forasmuch as I have seen the angel of the Lord *face to face.* And the Lord said unto him, Peace be unto thee; fear not' (Judg. vi. 12, 19–22). 'The angel of the Lord *appeared* unto the woman

(the wife of Manoah), and said unto her,' etc. . . . 'Then the woman came and told her husband, saying, *A man of God came unto me*, and his countenance was like the countenance of the angel of God, very terrible,' etc. . . . 'Then Manoah entreated the Lord, and said Oh, Lord, I pray Thee, let *the man of God* whom Thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born. And God hearkened to the voice of Manoah: and the angel of God *came again* unto the woman as she sat in the field: but Manoah her husband was not with her. And the woman made haste, and ran, and told her husband, and said unto him, Behold, *the man* hath appeared unto me, that came unto me the other day. And Manoah arose, and went after his wife, and came to *the man*, and said unto him, Art thou *the man* that spakest unto the woman? And he said, I am.' . . .

'And Manoah said unto the angel of the Lord, What is thy name, that when thy words come to pass we may do thee honour? And the angel of the Lord said unto him, Wherefore askest thou after my name, seeing it is Wonderful? So Manoah took a kid with the meal offering and offered it upon the rock unto the Lord: and the angel did wondrously; and Manoah and his wife looked on. For it came to pass, when the flame went up toward heaven from off the altar, that *the angel ascended in the flame.*' . . . 'And Manoah said unto his wife, *We shall surely die, because we have seen God*' (Judg. xiii. 2–22). 'The heavens were opened, and I saw *visions of God*, . . . *a throne*, as the appearance of a sapphire stone, and *upon the throne was a likeness as the appearance of a man upon it above*' (Ezek. i. 1, 26). 'Did we not cast *three men* bound into the midst of the fire? . . . Lo, I see *four men* loose, walking in the midst

of the fire, and they have no hurt; *and the aspect of the fourth is like a son of the gods'* (Dan. iii. 24, 25). These are wonderful Scriptures, and many more of a like nature might be added. The Person of whom they speak is called God and Man, and His actions were both Divine and human. Many have thought that He was only a created angel, seeing that He is so frequently called 'the angel of the Lord.' St. Augustine said, "If the Son appeared to the patriarchs, He appeared through the intermediate agency of a *created* being who represented Him, and through whom He spoke and acted." And in his book on *The Divinity of our Lord* (p. 58), the late Canon Liddon says: "The general doctrine of this great teacher (Augustine) that the Theophanies were not direct appearances of a Person in the Godhead, but self-manifestations of God through a created being, had been hinted at by some earlier Fathers, and was insisted on

by contemporary and later writers of the highest authority. This explanation has since become the predominant—although by no means the exclusive—judgment of the Church; and if it is not unaccompanied by considerable difficulties when we apply it to the sacred text, it certainly seems to relieve us of greater embarrassments than any which it creates." We cannot agree with Dr. Liddon in this conclusion, and for the following reasons. First, in many of the Scriptures just quoted the supernatural Person referred to is called 'the Lord' and 'God,' and also 'a man,' but never *an angel*: He is 'an angel *of the Lord*,' or 'the angel *of God*.' Second, the angel of the Lord never spoke as the representative of another (as Augustine thought him to be), but always in His own name and for Himself. Abraham called Him 'the Judge of all the earth' (Gen. xviii. 25), and in response to Abraham's petitions for the Sodomites, He said

once and again, '*I* will not do it,' etc. (Gen. xviii. 26–31). If He was not an angel, some may inquire, why then was He called 'the angel of the Lord'? For a manifest and all-sufficient reason. He never was named by this title until after He had entered into covenant with Abraham and his seed (Gen. xv. 18), from which highly important epoch He became to the patriarch and his posterity '*the Messenger of the Covenant*' (Mal. iii. 1), and therefore '*the Angel of the Lord*'—angel and messenger meaning the same thing. In the Epistle to the Hebrews (ix. 15) Jesus is called 'the Mediator of the new covenant,' and why? Because as Jehovah, or Lord God, He was the Mediator of the old covenant. The notion of St. Augustine, which Dr. Liddon accepted, and which many others believe, has "considerable difficulties" indeed; but the right conception of the matter presents no difficulties at all, and makes

all these seemingly-mysterious passages of the sacred Word beautifully clear and simple. Let this also be noted, that the God-Man appeared *most frequently* in times of crisis, and in the most formative periods of time—as, for instance, at the commencement of human history, and at the beginning of the history of the chosen people, who have played such an important part in the history of the world, and are destined to play a still greater part in time to come. They were made an elect race, not for their own sake only or chiefly, but that through them 'all nations of the earth should be blessed' (Gen. xii. 3). As the Book-Revelation of the Divine mind and will was developed, and 'the holy oracles' became increasingly known, the appearances of the God-Man became less and less frequent until the Old Testament was completed, when they ceased altogether.

Before proceeding to consider the New Testament declarations regarding the Divine Humanity of the Creator, we shall quote a few opinions of theologians and commentators regarding His Old Testament appearances, that our readers may see for themselves how illogical, inconsistent, and unsatisfactory they are.

We shall begin with Philo, who was an adept at perverting Scripture, and by whose teachings many have been misled. He describes the Old Testament Theophanies as "*irradiations* of Divine *power*," while the Bible itself invariably represents them as the *manifestations* of a *Person*, who was at once both Human and Divine.

Justin Martyr says: "The Old Testament revelations are revelations of the Logos. He appears at one time in the form of a man, at another in that of fire, at another in an incorporeal form." We do not know when

or where the Logos ever appeared "*in an incorporeal form.*" The very language is self-contradictory, for how can any person appear to others and yet be "incorporeal"? Symbols and emblems—like the flaming sword around the tree of life, and the Shekinah in the Temple — were not Personal manifestations at all, and ought not to be so regarded; they were symbols only. And if Justin Martyr was thinking of the bush in the desert when he referred to "fire," then he has altogether misapprehended what the Bible tells us when he says that the Logos "appeared in the form of fire." The *fire* which Moses beheld was the radiation of the glory of the Divine Man, and through that glory *His Person was visible.* Hence we read that 'The angel of the Lord *appeared unto him* in a flame out of the midst of the bush'; and after the Lord had spoken to Moses, and told him who He was, it is said, '*And Moses hid*

his face, for He was afraid to look upon God' (Exod. iii. 2–6).

The late Dr. Delitzsch, in his *System of Biblical Psychology* (pp. 80, 81), says: "Scripture appropriates to God human members, but still without anywhere speaking of a body of God. God indeed appears to the seers in human form: nevertheless the thought of an everlasting self-investing of the Divine nature in a human corporeity is absolutely foreign to it." Now this is a very definite and dogmatic statement: it declares that all the Old Testament appearances of the Lord "in human form" were mere appearances—only apparitional. Is that in harmony with the teachings of the Word? Did not the Lord say to Aaron and Miriam concerning Moses, '*the form of the Lord shall he behold*'? And under the oak trees at Mamre, did He not eat and drink of the meal which Abraham provided? And did not the Lord and His companion angels say to the

patriarch when he proposed to wash their feet, 'So do as thou hast said'? If the "form" of the Lord was not a *body*, what was it? True, it descended and ascended, appeared and disappeared, like the form of Christ after His resurrection, but was not that form a body? Did He not say to the disciples, 'Handle Me, and see'? Did He not eat before them? The pre-Incarnate body of the Lord was *spiritual*, and His body, after He rose from the dead, was *spiritual*, therefore they manifested themselves in a similar way and are spoken of in Scripture in exactly similar terms. If the appearances of the Saviour after His resurrection were real and human, what ground is there for believing that all His pre-Incarnate appearances were not equally real and human? If Dr. Delitzsch and other expositors had been less influenced by the philosophizings of Philo and the declarations of the Fathers, it is probable that they would have found it

easier to interpret and harmonize the teachings of Scripture regarding the Old Testament appearances of the Jehovah. In another place the Doctor says, "The Church rejected this humanizing of God." So much the worse for the Church, we unhesitatingly reply, for in rejecting the humanity of the Visible God, it threw away one of the sublimest and most comforting facts revealed in the sacred Word—a fact which throws a flood of light on the mediatorial work of the Son of God, and the nature of man, and the necessity and nature of the Incarnation. But what was the Church which committed this gigantic mistake and age-enduring blunder? It was not the Church of the apostles, for, as we shall presently see, it taught the visibility and substantiality of the pre-Incarnate Lord in the very strongest and most definite manner. It was the Church of the Fathers which erred here, as it also did in many other

important matters. Along with a false and baneful system of so-called spiritualizing, it developed a marvellous faculty for making huge assumptions on the very narrowest grounds—assumptions upon which the largest Churches in the Christendom of to-day have been mainly built up — and these evil tendencies and habits lay at the root of its misapprehensions. It would have been well if Christian men had always believed that the Scriptures say just what God intended they should, and that the most simple and natural interpretation of their declarations are the best. The Church to which Dr. Delitzsch refers was far from being infallible, and very frequently misinterpreted the teachings of the Word, both in relation to the nature of Christ and the nature of the Christian Church.

Good old Matthew Henry tells us in his comments on Genesis xxxii. 30, that "The Lord of

the angels often appeared, *and occasionally in a human shape*, before He assumed the human nature for good and all." But when or where, we inquire, did He ever appear in any other shape than the human? He is often called 'a man, and—so far as we know—all His Old Testament appearances were alike. True, He sometimes appeared *in glory*, as to Abraham in Ur, and to Moses in the desert of Sinai: and at other times *without the glory*, as to Abraham at Mamre, and to Jacob, Joshua, and Manoah (just as afterwards, in the days of His flesh, He was seen by Peter, James, and John, on the Mount of Transfiguration, both with and without the glory), but all His appearances were those of "a man."

In *Mediatorial Sovereignty*, George Steward writes, "The Lord God appeared often familiarly to men in the human form, *or its equivalent*." The words we have emphasized seem to be

utterly meaningless in the light of Scripture statement. What can they signify? In what are we to find "the equivalent" of the human form? Was it merely a ghost of that form?—an apparition? If so, it must have been a very substantial one, for it ate and drank, walked and talked, had its feet washed, and acted altogether in a very human-like fashion!

On Exodus xxiv. 10, '*They saw the God of Israel*,' Bush says, "The idea of a distinct personal appearance in human form *is excluded*, yet we may perhaps safely conceive that the luminous and glorious object presented to their view bore a remote resemblance to such a form." What a curious statement! The luminous object bore a remote resemblance to the human form, and yet the idea of a personal appearance in that form is to be excluded! There is no book in the world which has been so awfully—though it may be unconsciously—abused as the Bible. Let any

intelligent person compare Exodus xxiv. 10 with Revelation i. 13–18, and then say if in reading the former passage "the idea of a distinct personal appearance is excluded."

In a book recently published, the author—who is a scholarly man—inquires concerning the Old Testament appearances, "Were these the manifestations of the pre-existent Messiah, or were they the manifestations of Jehovah Himself, the Divine Being essentially—the God who is emphatically 'a Spirit'? Under any circumstances we have, to say the least, in these manifestations the shadowing forth of the human form, rudiments, so to speak, of that Divine Ideal which was . . . absolutely developed and set forth when the Logos became flesh, and the Lord Jesus, as very man, was clearly and fully revealed." We have here a sample of the utter confusion of thought which exists in many earnest, intelligent and devout minds regarding the appearances of

the pre-Incarnate Christ. The quotation is full of errors. The writer asks, "Were these the manifestations of *the Divine Being essentially—the God who is emphatically 'a Spirit'*?" Paul gives the answer, 'Whom no man hath seen, *nor can see*' (1 Tim. vi. 10). Again he says, "We have in these manifestations *the rudiments*, so to speak, of that *Divine Ideal* . . . which was set forth when the Logos became flesh, and the Lord Jesus, as *very man*, was clearly and fully revealed." In other words, the Man of the Old Testament was imperfectly human, and the flesh-and-blood Jesus of Nazareth the Divine Ideal of man. All this is exactly the opposite of the truth, as revealed in Scripture. The Primal Man, in whose image and likeness man was made, was the Perfect Man—God's Ideal; and the Incarnate Christ, who was made in 'the likeness of sinful flesh,' had to be 'made perfect through sufferings.'

Let us now turn to the New Testament Scriptures, and learn what they teach about the Divine Man in His pre-Incarnate state.

In Colossians i. 15, the Apostle Paul wrote of the Son as '*the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.*' This is one of the very sublimest and most instructive passages of sacred Scripture regarding the nature of the Christ. But, unfortunately, from the days of the apostolic Fathers, it has been so entirely misapprehended, that practically—so far as the great mass of Christian people are concerned—it might as well have had no existence. It is seldom, if ever, taken as a text for sermons, and the vast majority of Bible readers probably regard it as far too deep and mystical to be understood by ordinary minds. All this is very sad, and has proved an incalculable hindrance to the spiritual enlightenment and progress of the Catholic Church for many generations.

Take these words first: '*The image of the invisible God.*' What do they mean?

In his brief statements regarding them, Bishop Ellicott says: "Christian antiquity has ever regarded the expression 'image of God' as denoting the eternal Son's perfect *equality* with the Father in respect of His substance, nature, and eternity." Now, if the good Bishop had paid less attention to the opinion of "Christian antiquity," and more to the uniform declarations of Scripture regarding 'the image of the invisible God,' it is almost certain he would never have written these words. The term 'image' does not refer to *equality* but to *visibility.* The first of our race was made 'in the *image* of Him who created him,' but the fact that he bore His image did not make him *equal* to his Creator. The idea of equality was not in Paul's mind when he wrote of 'the image of the invisible God': he was thinking of the Invisible being brought into view.

Let the comments of Bishop Lightfoot be now briefly considered. What does he say about 'the image of the invisible God'? He takes a much more correct view of the meaning of 'image' than Bishop Ellicott has done. His words are these: "He is the *visible* representation of the *unseen* God." Again, "The underlying idea of the 'image' . . . is the *manifestation* of the *hidden*." And yet again, "The Word, whether pre-incarnate or incarnate, is the *revelation* of the *unseen* Father." These statements are clear and unmistakable, and exactly express the view of the visibility of the Son as Creator for which we contend. After all these plain declarations of the learned and able commentator, we naturally expected to find that he believed with us that 'the image of the invisible God' *was a Person who could be seen by created beings*,—"the *manifestation* of the *hidden*" and "the *revelation* of the *unseen Father*." There is nothing to the

contrary in his commentary on Colossians i. 15, but when we turn to what he says on Philippians ii. 6, we find what his belief really was. We shall therefore postpone our remarks on the foregoing definitions until we come to the consideration of that passage.

With equal clearness and fuller statement the Rev. Dr. A. Maclaren, of Manchester, says: "An 'image' is a likeness or representation, as of a king's head on a coin, or of a face reflected in a mirror. *Here, it is that which makes the invisible* VISIBLE. The God who dwells in the thick darkness, remote from sense and above thought, has come forth and made Himself visible to man, even in a very real way has come within the reach of man's senses *in the manhood of Jesus Christ.*" These words are a lucid and admirable description of the apostolic declaration; anything more accurate and beautiful need not be desired. But let no one fail to notice that the great

preacher has plainly *misapplied* them. Mark his concluding words, which we have put in italics, and then look at the passage in Colossians upon which he was commenting. "It does not refer *to the manhood of Jesus Christ the Redeemer*, but to His *visibility* as the *Creator* of all things." Let the words of the commentator be rightly applied, and we cannot wish for a clearer or better interpretation of the apostle's statement.

Turn next to the other declaration, '*The firstborn of all creation.*' These are remarkable words. Many have attempted to prove from them that the Firstborn was a created being, and therefore only a creature, though probably the first and greatest. But if He was merely a creature, however great, how could He have been 'the image of the invisible God'? Can clay represent gold, or any created being the Uncreated One? Others, who accept the words 'the image of the invisible God' as proving that He was Divine, regard His

Old Testament appearances as merely apparitional, and thus empty of their sublime significance the succeeding clause of the verse, 'the firstborn of all creation.' The two statements are counterpartal, and what God hath joined together let not man put asunder. Properly understood, they are in perfect harmony. 'The (visible) image of the invisible God' was 'the firstborn of all creation.' This means a great deal more than mere pre-existence. It certainly implies *a new beginning*, not in relation to God, but in relation to creation. It means that He became a substantial Being, in whom were hidden potentially the principles and essence of all things. He was in Himself 'the *beginning* of the creation of God' (Rev. iii. 14). *For what great ends did the Divine Son thus become 'the firstborn of all creation'?* For two great ends: primarily to *Create* all things, and then to act as *Mediator* between the Invisible Father and all His finite

children. Paul tells us three things concerning Him: first, that 'all things were created *in* Him'; second, that all things were created *by* Him; and, third, that all things were created *for* Him (Col. i. 16). It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell—the fulness of the Godhead—the fulness of creation—the fulness of humanity, therefore in Him as the "Firstborn" were contained "the promise and potency" of all things.

Let us now go to Philippians ii. 6, where we shall find the most wonderful passage in the New Testament referring to the nature of the Divine Man, 'the image of the invisible God': '*Who being (originally) in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God.*'

Consider, first, the extraordinary words ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ, 'in the form of God.' Bishop Lightfoot acknowledges that they refer to the *pre*-Incarnate

Christ, and says concerning the word "form," "It comprises all those *sensible* qualities which, *striking the eye*, lead to the conviction that we *see* such and such a thing." Having thus defined the apostolic term, he then inquires, "What meaning must we attach to the 'form of God,' in which our Lord pre-existed?" And to this great question he replies, "*The form of God must apply to the* ATTRIBUTES *of the Godhead*"—a very surprising and disappointing answer. *The attributes of God* are not *visible* in themselves, and *apart from embodiment* can never become to finite creatures "the *manifestation* of the *hidden*" or "the *revelation* of the *unseen*," which 'the image of the invisible God' was, as the Bishop has already told us in his comments on Colossians i. 15. There can be no "*sensible* qualities capable of *striking the eye*" in the attributes of an invisible and Divine Being: they have no "form," and therefore cannot be seen. But 'the image of the invisible God' had a form,

for He was 'the firstborn of all creation,' and very frequently appeared to the patriarchs and others in the days of old. Did he not say regarding Moses, 'the *form* of the Lord doth he behold'? (Num. xii. 8). Dr. Lightfoot says that "μορφῆ (form) originally refers *to the organs of sense.*" If so, how then can it possibly refer to the *Divine* nature of the Lord God, which is *invisible*? Not only so, but if "form" is synonymous with *attributes*, then, as all the Persons of the Godhead have the same attributes, each of them must have "form," of which there is no hint in Scripture. The term is applied to the Son in both the Old and New Testaments, and to Him alone. In *The Incarnation*, etc. (p. 157), Canon Gore says: "Jesus Christ pre-existed in the form of God! The word "form," *transferred from physical shape to spiritual type*, describes the permanent characteristics of a thing. Jesus Christ then, in His pre-existent state, was living in the permanent characteristics

of the life of God." What a strangely obscure, inconsequent, and impotent conclusion! According to this teaching, 'the *image* of the invisible God' was a Divine one after all. He was originally 'in the *form* of God,' but was just the Son of God still "living in the permanent characteristics of the life of God." And when he tells us that the word "form" *was transferred from physical shape to spiritual type*, we can only wonder what he means. The language seems to be meaningless. And by whom was this transference of form effected? Not by Paul, who declares that 'the form of God' was 'the *image* of the invisible God' and 'the *firstborn* of all creation.' Not by John, who calls 'the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the *beginning* of the creation of God' (Rev. iii. 14). And not by the Lord Himself, who said to Aaron and Miriam concerning Moses, 'the *form* of the Lord shall he behold.' Dr. John Pulsford, in *The Supremacy of Man* (p. 6), says

with a far deeper, clearer, and truer insight into the meaning of Paul's words: "The Form of God is the equivalent of His unsearchable Hiddenness. And without question, every possible idea of God must include essence and form. There must be Invisibility behind the Visibility, to account for the same. And if the Invisibility is to become both objective and operative, it must have its organ. What were the boundless ether, if it were not gathered up and expressed in its own sun? And how could the sun have a universality of operation unless it were in the bosom of the ether and ministered unto by the ether?" We need not add anything to these most reasonable, logical, and convincing words. In their light, the statements of most of our theologians and commentators on 'the form of God' seem to be confused and perplexing in the last degree. But further light will be thrown upon the remarkable words of the apostle, if we clearly

apprehend the significance of the term "originally." We do not know why the revisers of the New Testament did not put this word into the text, seeing that it has a place in the original Greek. 'Who being originally in the form of God.' This word "originally" does not reach back to eternity, but only to the beginning of time, when the Son of God became 'the Firstborn of all creation.' He did not possess 'the form of God' from all eternity, because when Father, Son, and Spirit were alone embodiment and visibility were not needed. But when beings were to be brought into existence, in whose bosoms a deep and ineradicable desire was to be Divinely implanted to have fellowship with a *Visible* God, then a bodily manifestation became a necessity. And, as we have already seen, there is nothing more certainly taught in the Scriptures than this, —that not from eternity but from before creation the Son had a visibility in "form" which the

Father and Spirit did not possess. But they had their visibility in Him, for in Him dwelt then, and dwelleth now, 'all the fulness of the Godhead *bodily*' (Col. ii. 9). Bishop Lightfoot says that "ὑπάρχων denotes *prior* existence, but not necessarily *eternal* existence." Just so, and therefore Paul used it in writing of the "Firstborn" whose "form" was not eternal. It is wonderful that this admission on the part of the Bishop did not open his eyes to the absurdity of his idea that "the form of God must apply to the *attributes* of the Godhead," for these attributes are eternal; and if our apostle had been referring to that which never had a beginning, he would not have employed the word ὑπάρχων to describe the origin of its existence. But still further light will be cast on the apostolic phrase 'the form of God' if we carefully consider the extraordinary words which follow it—'*counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God.*' We prefer the rendering

of this clause which was given by the American committee of revisers,—'*counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped.*' The former clause speaks of the *visibility* of the *Lord* God, and this clause of His *equality* with the Father. *But the equality was not apparent because of the "Form,"* and this gave to the Visible God the opportunity of manifesting *the lowliness of mind* which is commended by the apostle for the imitation of all true Christians. The equality between the Invisible God and His visible image was real, but it was not immediately manifest to created beings. The very visibility of the Lord might naturally have been apprehended as making Him *less than Divine.* Did not Arius and his followers argue that the Son having been seen by the patriarchs while the Father had not been seen, an Invisible Nature was not only distinct from, but also *higher* than, a nature which was cognizable by the senses? And were not all the

apostles Arians, in measure, until the evening of the Passover feast, when they communed with Jesus immediately before His betrayal and crucifixion? 'Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.' And Jesus answered, 'Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.' Now the request made by Philip in the upper room might just as naturally have been made by the first man in paradise, and the Lord—the Visible God—could have given the same reply, 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.' He could then have said, 'I and the Father are One,' but the oneness was not manifest, and He made no undue haste to make it manifest. Being lowly in heart, He did not count equality with God '*a thing to be grasped*,' but was willing to wait for the development of the creature's knowledge concerning Himself and the Father. What a charmingly beautiful thing this non-grasping of

equality is seen to be, when rightly apprehended! The humblest Being in the universe is God, and therefore when the Son came as the Creator in human form to reveal Him, He was clothed with Divine humility. Now, what does Bishop Lightfoot say about the non-grasping of equality on the part of 'the form of God'? If he failed rightly to interpret the first clause of the verse, it will not surprise us greatly if he also fails correctly to interpret the second. False premises very naturally lead even great minds to wrong conclusions. We may take the Bishop's comments on the words under consideration as a sample of the opinions of all our chief theologians, for they almost all agree. He first defines the apostle's meaning thus: "Though He preexisted in the form of God, yet He did not look upon equality with God as a prize which must not slip from His grasp." And then he explains the definition he has given in these words:

"Though existing before the worlds *in the Eternal Godhead*, yet He did not cling with avidity to the prerogatives of His Divine Majesty—did not *display* His equality with God." A strange explanation! If "form" be equivalent to *attributes*, and 'the form of God' existed only "in the eternal Godhead," and therefore was God *and God only*, then what meaning can we attach to the statement that He did not ambitiously *display* His equality with God? To say that God did not grasp equality with God, is surely absurd. A *personal* manifestation of the Son as God to finite creatures (if that had been possible) must also have been a manifestation of the Divine Father, seeing that the Son is the Revealer of God: but a personal manifestation was not possible, because the Son as a Person of the Godhead is just as *invisible* as the Father and the Holy Ghost. Or if the manifestation given had not been personal, but only one of *Work or Word*,

then *that* manifestation also, being purely Divine, must have displayed His equality with God. But if, as we believe, 'the image of the invisible God' was *Visible* and 'the form of God' *Human*, then the words of the apostle are simple and suggestive, beautiful and sublime. As the God-Man, the Creator might very naturally appear to created beings as *inferior* to the Infinite and Invisible Father. This would not be so when they came truly to know Him; but meanwhile in divinest humility 'He counted not the being on an equality with God *a thing to be grasped*,' therefore, says the apostle, 'Have this mind in you.'

There is another remarkable passage in Hebrews (i. 3) to which we must call the attention of the reader, if only for a moment or two—'Who being the effulgence of His glory and the very image (or impress) of His substance.' This is a beautiful expression of the same idea that in the *image*

of God the Invisible Father was made visible. Bishop Westcott says on this passage: "The glory of God finds expression in the Son as its effulgence, and the essence of God finds expression in Him as its type; but neither figure must be pressed to conclusions: the luminous image may be said to have no substantive existence." It is wonderful how Bishops agree, even while making declarations which are self-contradictory, and these declarations may surely and without offence be thus described. If the Creator, 'through whom God made the worlds' (context), had "no substantive existence," or, in other words, no visible Personality, then how could He be "*the effulgent expression of the Divine glory*," or "*the typical expression of the Divine essence*," or "*the luminous image of the Divine substance*"? It was well for the Bishop to say that "neither figure can be pressed to conclusions"; for if these figures were thus pressed, they would lead to the

very opposite conclusion to that at which he arrived.

And now, finally, let us briefly meditate upon the declarations of John in the first chapter of his Gospel. 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God' (John i. 1). We have reserved the consideration of these words to the last because John wrote his Gospel after all the Epistles were written, and was no doubt familiar with them all. In dealing with the nature of Christ he was not likely to go over the same ground as Paul and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews had done, and therefore having emphatically declared that the Logos was "God," and "Creator" of all things, and the Giver of "life" and "light" unto men, he hastens on to state the glorious fact that 'the Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us,' and also to give a detailed account of much of what Jesus

had said and done. Had it lain in the line of his purpose to enlarge on the *pre*-Incarnate nature of his Lord, and to explain the meaning of the term "Logos," then doubtless his teaching would have been seen to be in perfect harmony with that of Paul. Unfortunately the words of Paul have been generally interpreted by those of John, and these again by Greek philosophy, which grievously perverted their meaning. The Logos of John was a Person, but—as Canon Gore has told us—that Person was reduced by the Alexandrian philosophy to "the Divine *reason or thought*, which is the archetypal *idea* or moulding *principle* of the material world." Here, verily, was transformation with a vengeance. He who 'was with God and was God; became in the writings of Philo only an "idea" or "principle" of the Divine mind. In the late Dr. Liddon's excellent book on *The Divinity of our Lord* (p. 230), he thus writes, "The Divine Logos

is God reflected in His own eternal thought: in the Logos, God is His own object." We see here the baneful effect of Greek philosophy, which has led this able writer to express himself in words which (if they have any meaning at all) we fail to apprehend. They seem to make that which is mysterious an unfathomable mystery. On page 32 he says: "Yet the Logos necessarily suggests to our minds the further idea of communicativeness; the Logos is Speech as well as Thought. And of His actual self-communication St. John mentions two phases or stages—the first, Creation; the second, Revelation." To the same effect, Canon Gore, in *The Incarnation*, etc. (p. 69), has thus expressed himself: "In the Targums, or early Jewish paraphrases on the Old Testament, . . . the Word of God had come to be used personally as almost equivalent to God manifesting Himself, or God in action. . . . In the Fourth Gospel, also, Logos must be trans-

lated not 'reason' but 'word'; and this means that the phraseology of St. John has its roots not in Platonic or Stoic idealism, but in the Jewish belief in the Word of God—the manifestation of His will in creation or in revelation." Now, there are two things in these quotations which deserve special attention. Take the least important first. He who lay on the breast of Jesus at the Passover feast in the upper room like a lovely and sweet-scented blossom on the bosom of God, and who was 'the disciple whom Jesus loved,' because he was the most loving disciple and therefore the most Christlike of them all,—he did not need to go either to Greek philosophy or Alexandrian idealism to learn about the nature of his Lord. He had had better teachers than Plato and Philo. In the outer circle of the twelve there was an inner circle of three—Peter, James, and John—and the loftiest writer of the three was the last, not merely be-

cause he lived the longest and had thereby the opportunity of acquiring a deeper insight into spiritual realities than his brethren, but also and chiefly because he was the most spiritually-minded of the three, and therefore received in largest measure the inspiration and enlightenment of the Holy Ghost. It is positively distressing to see how the words and teachings of John have been interpreted in the earthly light of mere philosophy, thereby testing and judging Divine revelations by the paltry theorizings and superficial speculations of men. We are glad that Canon Gore recognised and acknowledged what Dr. Liddon apparently did not see, or at least has not stated, and yet he has failed to deduce any practical conclusion therefrom, but goes back to the standpoint of Dr. Liddon and says that the declaration of God by the Logos was "the manifestation of His will in Creation or in Revelation." This is the second point to be noticed,

and it is vastly important. It is true that in creation and revelation the Logos has given an exhibition of the Divine power and wisdom, goodness and "will," but is it right to call a manifestation of attributes and qualities a manifestation of *Himself* or a manifestation of the Father? Does a watchmaker manifest *himself* in the watch that he makes, or a musician in the piece of music he has composed? There is in every work, either human or Divine, a partial revelation of the worker, but it would be an utter abuse of both thought and language to call that a manifestation of the worker. Neither creation, nor revelation, nor both together, could possibly be an adequate and satisfying manifestation of God. So far as we know there was no Book-Revelation of God in the world until many long centuries after the creation of man, and that Revelation was sent to sin-corrupted and guilty creatures. Had humanity never fallen, it is prob-

able that it would never have required a Bible at all. And why? Because Divine Revelations were given to the first of our race *directly from the living lips of the God-Man*, in Whose image and likeness man was made, and from Whose immediate and visible presence the original transgressors naturally tried to hide amongst the trees of the garden. The Logos in the beginning did not either manifest Himself or reveal the Father through the medium of a *written* Revelation. Then think of *Nature* as a manifestation of God. 'The heavens are the Lord's, but the earth hath He given to the children of men.' And what is the earth to them? It was Divinely meant to be their birthplace, nursery, school, library, playground, home, and temple. Think of it as a home. How beautiful it was!—roofed over with the eternal blue of the ethereal sky, lighted with the glorious sunshine of day and the moonbeams and star-rays of night, curtained with the ever-

changing and always charming clouds, refreshed with breezes which were pure and sweet as the breath of God, watered by the rains and flowing rivers, carpeted with verdure, adorned with flowers lovely as the robes of angels, scented with odours, and full of the melodies of singing birds, the manifold voices of winds and waters, and all moving things. The natural heavens continually ministered to the earth, that the earth in turn might minister to humanity, and in all its varied operations and manifold results it was ever rendering service to mankind. The fields and forests, meadows and mountains, rills and rivers, lakes and seas, were Divinely-appointed servants to the children of the Eternal Father. But what is any home, however beautiful and happy it may be, *without the visible presence of father and mother*? It was of their creation, and may be full of the tokens of their thoughtfulness and love, but without their personal presence the

house is not a home, and the children are practically orphanized. In like manner this world could never have been a real home to the human family, even in a sinless condition, apart from the visible presence of the Divine Man to reveal and manifest the Fatherhood and Motherhood of God. Judging from what the Scriptures tell us, such revelations and manifestations were abundant in Eden, so much so, indeed, that the happy dwellers there were *familiar* with the Visible God; and if only they had chosen to be loyal and obedient, and thereby formed and developed a true moral character, they would have enjoyed with ever-increasing fulness the visible presence and face to face fellowship of their Lord. But even after the fall He graciously continued to give them, *in measure*, and according to their need, revelations and manifestations as before. And all along the period of the Old Testament dispensations they

were given from time to time, but with the greatest frequency and fulness to Abraham, Moses, and the chief men of Israel, by whom the elect people were instrumentally taught, guided, and governed. Through the revelations given and the manifestations granted the Fatherhood and Motherhood of God were still revealed. Surely His *Fatherhood* was manifested in the disciplinary treatment He gave to the first transgressors—in his dealings with Cain, in the sending of the flood, in the call of Abraham, in the great commission which He gave to Moses, in the deliverance of the Israelites from the bondage of Egypt, in the giving of the law from Mount Sinai, in the guidance He vouchsafed to them through 'the terrible wilderness,' and in all His wise and gracious dealings with them in the land of promise. And surely the Divine *Motherhood* was also manifested when the Lord God made coats of skins and clothed the parents of

our race when the sense of guilt had made them conscious of their nakedness: when He said to Hagar as she sat and wept in her loneliness and desolation in the wilderness of Beersheba, 'What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not, for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand, for I will make him a great nation': when His chosen people on many occasions were pardoned for their transgressions, and when, because of their wilfulness and perversity, He was impelled to exclaim with a voice full of tears, 'Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; I have nourished and brought up children and they have rebelled against Me': when He cried to them in their moral wanderings, 'Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? Return unto Me, for I have redeemed you': and when after their return He rejoicingly said, 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kind-

ness have I drawn thee'; 'can a woman forget her sucking child that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, these may forget, yet will I not forget thee; behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands': 'As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted': 'Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name, thou art Mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; and when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee, for I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour.' We can hear the very beatings of the motherly heart of God in these thrillingly-pathetic, tender, and exulting utterances. But nothing of all these wonderful revelations and personal manifestations were rightly appre-

hended by the apostolic Fathers, who saw in the Old Testament Theophanies only apparitional appearances, or worse still, mere angelic agency. In their laudable desire to uphold the Divine dignity they really lowered it, and that to an enormous and deplorable extent. In trying to maintain His greatness, they succeeded in making Him little. Their notions of dignity and greatness were formed by the pagan imperialism of Rome, and not by the Divinely beautiful sight of the loving father and mother in the midst of their family. The highest greatness of God does not consist of almightiness and unapproachable majesty, but of tenderness, lowliness, and love—a love which 'delighteth in mercy.' The Logos as the Divine Man was a 'God nigh at hand,' and 'not a God afar off.' He has ever been to all created beings — constantly in heaven and frequently upon earth—the Visible God, and the grand connecting link between the Infinite and

Invisible Father and all His finite children, both angelic and human. *Mediatorship necessitated both embodiment and visibility*, that, standing midway, as it were, between God and men, He might act as the Father's Representative, and ever be able to say, 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.' *Man craves, not only for the spiritual vision of the unseen God, but for a face to face sight of a Visible God.* This desire has been and is universal, as the idolatries of tribes and nations abundantly testify. It is the real source and secret of the widespread and age-to-age enduring service of idols. However ignorant and degraded men may be, they are impelled to worship, and they always desire to worship a Visible God. Not only so, but their visible God is always *human*, for, as some one has truly said, "Man cannot otherwise conceive of God than after his own image." Indeed it is impossible to think of God at all *without giving*

Him a human form. All the idols of heathendom to-day are more or less human in appearance, and even the highest gods of the ancient Grecian mythology were only men magnified. A missionary correspondent recently sent to *The Christian World* "Interesting Items from India," and one was as follows: "We see the insufficiency of mere Theism, as propounded by the Brahmo Somaj movement, to satisfy the emotional nature of the Hindu; and how his philosophical nature must ever turn from all its abstractions to that popular side of his religion which, with all its degrading worship, enshrines the idea of an Incarnation, *and witnesses to the instinctive craving of the human heart to see a humanized God.*" From whence did this profound, universal, and instinctive desire to see God come into the human heart? Did sin create it? Not so; sin corrupted and weakened it, but could never have given it birth. How then did it arise? The

universality of its experience and its instinctive nature prove that it was Divinely implanted; and being so, it was meant to be met and everlastingly satisfied. And it was satisfied in the beginning, before Moral Evil was humanly and wickedly permitted to alienate man from God. And is it not true that just in proportion as Christian men and women now receive the Invisible Spirit of God within them, they ardently long to see the Visible God without them, and cry, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly'? The great hope set before them in the gospel is the hope of His *appearing*, and the very highest delight of heaven shall be realized '*when they see His face*.' The more vivid and pure their spiritual vision of the Invisible God becomes, the deeper and more intense is their longing to be with the Visible God, that they may '*see Him as He is*.' The *faith* of all believers is largely grounded on the *sight* which the first

Christians obtained of the Risen Saviour; and their faith will be crowned and their hearts fully satisfied, not by spiritual vision or a perfected trust, but by an immediate and *face to face sight* of the Divine Man, in Whose presence they shall eternally and rejoicingly abide. 'I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also.'

CHAPTER IV

THE NATURE OF MAN

BEFORE proceeding to consider the *Incarnation* of the God-Man—its necessity, nature, purpose, and results—let us try to obtain a clear apprehension of *the nature of man*—first, as he was in his original innocency; second, as he now is in his sinful, corrupt, and dying condition; and third, as he shall one day become in his resurrected, spiritualized, and glorified state. The more perfectly we understand our own nature in these different aspects the better able we shall be to apprehend the nature of Christ in its original, Incarnate, and glorified states.

'The *Lord* God formed man of the dust of the ground'—whether by a creative act or an evolutionary process is of little consequence—'and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.' From the moment that the Divine breath inbreathed into him the very life of God he was a son of the Eternal Father. Luke calls Adam 'the son of God' (Luke iii. 38). The Creator was the embodied *Godhead*, and man was a *triune* being like Himself. In his higher nature he bore the 'image' of his Maker, and in his lower nature the physical —His 'likeness.' It is probable that the very first object upon which he looked was the God-Man—his Creator; and if so, he would gaze into His perfectly beautiful and love-illumined face with a calm and satisfied gladness. Tertullian says that "God, in forming the first man, *took for pattern the future Man—Christ*"; and it is truly astonishing how many great theologians

and commentators have accepted his dictum, or, if not directly affected by his teaching, have held the same belief. For instance, Canon Gore says in *The Incarnation*, etc. (p. 116): "Man was made in God's image. The significance of this truth from our present point of view is, that in that original constitution of manhood lies, as the Father saw, *the prophecy of the Divine Incarnation*, and the grounds of its possibility." The writers of these and all similar statements have manifestly overlooked the plain declarations of Scripture. The nature of man, instead of having a forward, had a backward look. It was not made in the image and likeness of a coming Redeemer, but in the image and likeness 'of Him who *created* him' (Gen. i. 26, 27). Man was not made to sin; and had he never fallen, no Redeemer or redemption would ever have been required. Instead of being made after the pattern of the Incarnate Christ, Christ, when He came, was

made 'in the likeness of sinful flesh' (Rom. viii. 3). Man was made in the image and likeness of his Creator, and *corrupted* them; and then the Creator was made in the likeness of the fallen creature, that He might *redeem* him. All such teaching as that of Tertullian on this matter is wholly mistaken and unscriptural.

What sort of physical nature, then, did the first man and father of the human family receive from his Creator? It was not a *spiritual* body, like those of the angels and like that of the Lord God, but *a natural body of flesh and blood.* When woman was brought to man by the Creator, the man said, 'This is now *bone of my bone*, and *flesh of my flesh*' (Gen. ii. 23). The Lord said unto Cain, 'What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's *blood* crieth unto Me from the ground' (Gen. iv. 10).

But the body of man was not Divinely in-

tended to be *always* flesh and blood. Though made of the dust of the ground, it had been fashioned into the likeness of Him by whom it was formed; and having within it no taint of impurity, and no element of decay, it was designed and fitted to live for ever. Though not inherently immortal, it was made for Immortality. But it could become immortal only by being changed into *a spiritual body.* This change was Divinely intended for man; and if only he had retained his pristine purity, maintained his primary relationship with his Creator, and formed and developed a holy and Godlike moral character—an upward pathway of unending progress, ever-increasing wisdom and power, and ever-deepening blessedness lay before him. 'First the natural, and then the spiritual,' was God's method in creation. If it be true now that 'flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,' we may be perfectly sure

that it was equally true in Eden. A flesh-and-blood body was neither designed nor fitted to ascend from the earth into the heavens, and attain the glorious destiny for which it had been created. A great change was necessary—*how was it to be effected*? Not by miracle, but by a gradual process of transformation and development. Had man resisted temptation, shut his heart to Moral Evil and opened it Godwards to the inflowing of all good, not only would his higher nature have been continually and eternally spiritualized, but his lower nature also. The Divine Spirit ever descending into the human spirit, and from thence into the soul and the body, the entire being would have been uplifted and purified, and made more and more spiritual and beautiful for ever. Under this process—assisted probably by the eating of the fruit of the tree of life—the body would have been gradually and progressively ennobled until it

became altogether *spiritual*, and as such incorruptible and immortal. It shall not attain to anything through Redemption and Resurrection which it would not have reached by this process of exaltation, had it never been corrupted and made mortal by the destructive power of sin. And while the lower part of man's nature was thus being changed, the higher parts also would have been growing up into the fulness of the stature of the perfect man. And when the process was completed, so far as this world permitted it, then he would have passed into the heavens —not by miracle, but by translation, as Enoch and Elijah did—there to continue his upward course of development and progress for evermore. At first he was made only 'a little lower than the angels,' or, as it is rightly rendered in the margin of the Revised Version, 'for *a little while* lower than the angels.' The angels resemble human beings—they are frequently called 'men'

both in the Old Testament and in the New. They, too, in all likelihood, were made with flesh-and-blood bodies; but they had risen by development out of the natural into the spiritual and celestial condition (1 Cor. xv. 40); and, therefore, when man was made with a flesh-and-blood constitution he was for a little while in a lower condition than that to which they had attained. But if he had pursued the upward course of obedience in which they had walked with concentration and persistency, he, too, at length would have risen out of the natural into the spiritual state, and become '*equal unto the angels*' —an equality to which all saved and sanctified souls shall attain in the great future; for 'in the resurrection they are as the angels of God in heaven' (Matt. xxii. 30). In his book *On Behalf of Belief* (pp. 276, 277), Canon Holland truly remarks: "Man's body was made so as to receive its transfiguration through the light that should

stream down into it out of the illuminated world, with which its intellect, its will, and its love were to bring it in contact. Its nature was ready to respond to that replenishing—to that upward draw. And now it has missed its aim, it has lost its development. It is the flesh which so desperately feels the damage and realizes the loss; and all its consequent trouble and turmoil is but the accusing cry which it utters against the false and disloyal spirit which, by professing to be natural, has wrecked its nature—by sinking to the lower level of the flesh, has irretrievably thwarted the tendencies and capacities of the flesh."

The necessary *trial* which the Creator put upon the primal pair, by putting the tree of testing in the midst of the garden, was not a temptation, but just the reverse. Temptation is an enticement to wrong-doing; but instead of enticing them to eat the forbidden fruit, He warned them

against it—'Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.' But the trial necessarily and lovingly made by God was turned into a temptation by the great deceiver, who said: 'Ye shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil.' It is probable that this was the very thought which led Satan himself to his fall, and therefore he made use of it in tempting others. 'How art thou fallen from heaven, O day star, son of the morning! . . . Thou saidst in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God . . . I will be like the Most High: yet thou shalt be brought down to hell' (Isa. xiv. 12–15). In these wonderful days of enlightenment, culture, and progress, many have reduced the personal devil to a mere principle of evil; but Jesus Christ said concerning him (and we are old-fashioned enough

to believe what He said, rather than the empty and flippant theorizings of would-be "thinkers"): 'Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and stood not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof' (John viii. 44). Now these words certainly teach the following facts: first, that the devil is a person—'he'; second, that at one time he was good—'he stood not in the truth'; third, that as a fallen being he became a destroyer—'he was a murderer from the beginning'; fourth, that he destroys by deceiving—'he is a liar'; fifth, that he was the *first* to deceive others—'he is a liar, and the *father* of lies'; sixth, that all human beings who cherish his spirit are his children—'ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do.' *The origin of evil* has always been

a mystery, and often a perplexity to thoughtful minds; but these words of our Lord bring us as near to its origin as we may ever be able to come, at least on earth, and in our present state of existence. Evil had its origin *in the bosom of one individual*, and that individual is here called 'the devil.' Jesus also called him 'the *prince* of the devils,' and 'the wicked *one*.' The mystery still remains how evil could originate in a God-created being who was not impelled to sin by any evil inward tendency, nor by any temptation externally presented; but, at any rate, we stand immediately in front of the mystery when we know that the very fountain and beginning of evil was in one person. He it was who said to the first of our race, 'Ye shall not surely die'—a falsehood worthy of the father of lies! The lie was an enticement, and therefore a temptation. The tempted ones had power to resist it; and if only they had used

the power, they would have come off 'more than conquerors,' and been greatly blessed by the fiery trial through which they had passed, for 'Blessed is he that endureth temptation.' But, alas! they did not resist it, but, when led into the presence of temptation, yielded to its power. And the results in each of them were terrible. The *spirit* lost its life and harmonious relationship with God; the *soul* (including mind and heart) was darkened and defiled; and the *body* became corrupted, disordered, and disorganised. It not only continued to be a flesh-and-blood organisation, but also became the subject of weakness and pain, disease and death. The blood was poisoned, the flesh tainted, and all its senses and energies weakened and injured. And these were but foretastes of the innumerable miseries and madnesses which would distress and distract their posterity for ages, as weary and footsore they travel onward and downward to death and the

grave. May we not believe that it is for the ultimate good of the whole moral universe that evil exists, and also that it is being allowed a long opportunity to do its best or its worst for humanity? The history of mankind is giving abundant evidence of the exceeding sinfulness and folly of self-will and the utter inability of man to be his own saviour; it is also showing by many infallible proofs that 'God is Love,' and that 'His mercy endureth for ever.' And if these great truths can only be effectively taught to the entire universe by the prolonged and sore travail of humanity, it is surely well that it should be Divinely permitted and its final results everlastingly chronicled in the literature of all the worlds.

Let us now inquire, *What are the present effects of the Gospel of Christ in the nature of a true believer*? First of all, by the belief of the Truth as it is in Jesus, and the acceptance of Christ

Himself as a personal Saviour, the *spirit* is quickened into life. It 'passes from death unto life,' and becomes the conscious possessor of that life which Jesus came to give, and to give with ever-increasing abundance for evermore (John x. 10). That life is the very life of God—the Life of Love—than which there is no higher life in the universe. It is spiritual in its nature, Divine in its quality, and eternal in duration (1 John v. 11–13). The gospel also blesses the *soul*, as well as the spirit. It enlightens the mind, purifies, enlarges, and comforts the heart, and makes all their thoughts and affections, purposes and desires increasingly Christian. And it blesses the *body* too, in measure, by cooling its passions, calming its tempers, and regulating all its appetites, thereby purifying the blood and healing and strengthening the flesh. But it cannot *wholly* deliver the flesh from decay and death—and why? Because these are the ultimate effects of sin and

the Divine penalty of guilt, and therefore cannot be escaped. The Creator said 'dying, thou shalt die,' and His word can never be broken. The life of the *spirit* died when man sinned; and no human being is an inheritor of spiritual life through the natural birth of the flesh. 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again' (John iii. 6, 7). The true Christian has passed through this new birth, and is once more a child of God through faith in Christ. But his *body* has not yet paid the penalty of sin, and therefore it must die. 'It is appointed unto all men once to die.' 'Through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all have sinned' (Rom. v. 12). The present condition of every Christian, therefore, is this—his higher nature, which was dead, has been quickened into new-

ness of life; while his lower nature still remains under 'the law of sin,' and must pay the penalty of death. Paul states the truth briefly and clearly when he says, 'If Christ be in you, the body is dying because of sin; but the spirit lives because of righteousness' (Rom. viii. 10). 'Where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly: that as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord' (Rom. v. 20, 21).

But if the spirit of the believer in Christ has passed from death unto life—life spiritual and eternal, the *body* also in due time shall likewise pass from death unto life—the life of Immortality. The salvation of the higher nature ensures the salvation of the lower also. 'Now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead'

(1 Cor. xv. 20, 21). 'If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, He that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies' (Rom. viii. 11). But as in the ancient times, so now, 'Some one will say, How are the dead raised? and with what manner of body do they come?' and no better answer can be given than the one which satisfied the gigantic mind and heart of Paul, and which has comforted millions of bereaved and broken hearts since his day, 'There is a natural body, and there is also a spiritual body. Howbeit that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural: then that which is spiritual.' The body 'sown in corruption, is raised in incorruption: sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory: sown in weakness, it is raised in power: sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body' (1 Cor. xv. 42–44). And thus the whole being is eter-

nally saved and sanctified, spiritualized and glorified, and has attained the Divine purpose for which it was created, and for which it was redeemed.

CHAPTER V

THE INCARNATION OF THE DIVINE MAN

CIVILIZATION and progress have done great things for humanity. Industry, commerce, and education have brought manifold comforts and blessings to men, but all of them are earthly in their origin and nature, and can minister only to that natural life which is transitory and perishing. It is a universal law that nothing can rise above its own level, or produce an influence greater than itself. Nature lies under the law of decay, and therefore all its products must die. It is true that it perpetuates itself by constant renewals, and that humanity shares with it in this

form of immortality; for though men die, the human race continues to live. Nations perish, but civilization remains and advances. The philosophy of Greece and the institutions of Rome survive, though the peoples who created them have passed away like the flowers of a summer that is gone. The physical life of every human being is sustained by constant renewal, but there is ever the progress towards decay and dissolution; and when at length old age comes, no temperance in diet, no husbanding of strength, and no amount of care will save any one from the death to which everything mortal is appointed.

Nothing less and nothing else than a *Divine* Redemption could bring to humanity the salvation it required, and that great and glorious Redemption was provided. The fall of man did not take God by surprise. He foresaw it from eternity, and in the Father's gracious purpose His

own beloved Son was 'foreknown, indeed, before the foundation of the world, but was manifested at the end of the times for your sake' (1 Pet. i. 20). And from the day that man sinned, the Creator began to speak and act *as His Saviour.* It was He who announced in Eden that the seed of the woman would bruise the serpent's head. It was He who clothed the first transgressors with the skins of beasts, after they had fallen into the *animal* sphere of existence. It was He who gave the great commission to Moses, to go down into Egypt and deliver the children of Abraham from the hand of Pharaoh. It was He who led them through the Red Sea as on dry land, and afterwards preserved and protected, educated and disciplined them through all the long period of their wilderness wanderings. It was He who established them in the land of promise, and prospered and blessed them there. It was He who delivered them on many occasions from the hands

of their enemies, and brought them back again into the land of their fathers, when their long exile in Babylon had served its end. It was He who along all the period of the old dispensation was the Guide and Guardian of His people, and who constantly cared for and kept them as the apple of His eye. But all these redemptive dealings with individuals and a nation were superficial and limited. They neither effected a complete salvation from sin, nor provided redemption for the race. They were therefore only foretastes and prophecies of these great and universal blessings.

Why was Redemption necessary? It was absolutely necessary, because both the nature and character of man had been ruined—not by necessity or accident, but by intelligent and wilful wrongdoing. He brought upon himself a great curse—a curse which corrupts and destroys the whole of his threefold nature, and develops a

moral character which is impure and defective. He is spiritually dead, morally unclean, mentally dark and physically mortal ; and these are all the outcome of a voluntary disobedience. He has violated the Divine Law, which is unchangeable, being perfect, and therefore its natural effects are certain and enduring. They can neither be evaded nor set aside. Both the cause and its results are irremediable, so far as man himself is concerned. It is not possible for him, by his own unaided efforts, to rise up out of the terrible condition into which sin has brought him. No conceivable amount of acquired strength, knowledge, culture, or refinement, could ever evolve spiritual life out of that which is carnal. Neither could they perfectly enlighten the mind, or purify the heart, or lift up the body out of the grasp of death into the possession and enjoyment of an immortal existence. Therefore Revelation and Redemption, Renewal and Restoration were all

needed; and if ever they were to come to him, they could come only from God. And God, in infinite lovingkindness and compassion, graciously bestowed them.

By whom was the Redemption of humanity to be wrought out? Not by man himself, nor by any created being in the universe could such a stupendous work be accomplished. But help was laid upon One 'mighty to save,' even the Son of the Eternal Father and the Creator of all things. He was the Head of the human race—'the Head of every man is Christ.' When the creature fell, the great Creator took his fall to heart, even as the folly or wickedness of a child chills and crushes the parental spirit. His love impelled Him to pity and to save, and therefore He is able to say to every ransomed sinner, 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.'

But now, take special note of this :—*The original Humanity of the Divine Son, being spiritual in its nature, it was not possible for Him in that Humanity to work out the redemption of the fallen race—and why? Because 'the form of God' could neither suffer nor die, and death being the penal effect of sin, it was impossible to take away sin except by suffering its penalty.*

"As 'Form of God' He could not die,
Nor take the sinner's place;
Therefore in flesh and blood He came,
To save our ruined race."

The effect ceases only when the cause is removed. God said that the sinner must die, and His word cannot be broken. If therefore the Creator of man was to become his Redeemer, it was absolutely necessary that He should have a body prepared for Him that could both suffer and die. (Hebrews x. 5, 10.)

What then was the Incarnation? A very extraordinary answer has been given by some recent theologians to this great question. They have regarded it as the descent of Deity into Humanity for a *twofold* purpose—not only to *redeem* mankind, but also, and first, *to crown and consummate creation.* Thomas Aquinas held this opinion, and others since his day; and Bishop Westcott says in *The Gospel of Creation*, which he has put into his commentary on John's First Epistle, "The thought that the Incarnation was part of the Divine purpose in Creation, opens unto us, as I believe, wider views of the wisdom of God than we commonly embrace." Canon Gore also in *The Incarnation*, etc., writes thus on page 43: "If then we speak of the Incarnation as *the crown of natural development in the universe*, and in accordance with its law, we are not using a language new to Christianity." We humbly venture to reply that if this language,

and the idea it embodies, are not new to theology, they are certainly new to the Scriptures, and are altogether contrary to the entire tenor of the Word of God. It declares that the creative work of the Lord God was *finished* when man was made, and that He rested on the seventh day in complacent satisfaction because He saw that the whole of His work was 'very good' (Gen. ii. 1). That *finished* creation needed no "crown" but the crown of a natural development. But sin corrupted the whole of God's work, and put a stop to its proper development. The development of humanity in sin is not a natural development, but altogether *un*natural and abnormal. Therefore the race required to be ransomed and renewed, that it might be restored to a truly *natural* condition. The work of Redemption could be accomplished only by the Creator, and for the doing of that work He needed to become Incarnate. This, we apprehend, is the language

of Christianity and the teaching of the Bible, and they are wholly opposed to the statement of Canon Gore. And to show that the idea of the Incarnation being the crown and consummation of Creation was not a passing thought in his mind, he proceeds as follows on pages 52, 53: "Let me summarize my preliminary contention. Read then, I would say, the book of Nature, which is God's book; read especially its later chapters, when moral beings appear upon the scene: you find it *a plot without a dénoûment, a complication without a solution, a first volume which demands a second.* Study the Christ. He appears as the second volume of the Divine Word, *in which the threads are being disentangled.*" Yes, truly! "the threads were disentangled" by the Saviour, because *sin* had mingled and confused them; but sin was not a part of the creation, nor in any way desired or designed by God, and had it never entered into the world through wilful and

intelligent disobedience to the Divine commands, no *confusion* would have arisen, and no redemptive work of *disentanglement* been required. To go back to the beginning, before sin had found an entrance into the human heart, and declare concerning the *finished* creation over which the Creator rejoiced, that it was "a plot without a *dénoûment*, a complication without a solution, a first volume which demands a second," is, to say the least, very surprising. The entire conception, as it seems to us, is a complete misapprehension of the truth, and has arisen out of the failure to recognise in the Creator — the God-Man — the crown and consummation of the creation which He had brought into existence. But for sin, the Incarnation would not have been necessary, and would never have taken place, and therefore to regard it as "the crown and consummation of creation" is an entire mistake.

Again, then, we inquire, *What was the Incar-*

nation? It was not the descent of Deity into Humanity, as is generally believed, but *the coming down of the God-Man into 'flesh.'* We are familiar with the declaration that in the Incarnation "God became Man," but there is no such statement in Scripture. The term invariably used in the New Testament is not man, but 'flesh,' and there is a vast difference of meaning in the two words. The distinction between them has not been recognised as it ought to have been, because the flesh-and-blood nature of man has been mistakenly regarded as his true nature for the earthly life, and therefore the words 'Man' and 'flesh,' have been taken as synonymous. For instance, Dr. Oosterzee says in *The Image of Christ*: "The beloved apostle John represents the denial of *the true humanity* of the Lord as the very spirit of antichrist." It was not so. What John says is this: 'Every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come *in the flesh*

is of God, and every spirit which confesseth not Jesus is not of God' (1 John iv. 2). And thus it is through all our religious literature; *Man* and *flesh* are interchangeable terms. But they are never interchanged in the New Testament, and this very fact ought long ago to have awakened suspicions and questionings regarding the current view of the Incarnation.

The passage of Scripture which deals most directly and definitely with the nature of Christ, both in His pre-Incarnate and Incarnate states, is Philippians ii. 6–8. It puts clearly before us what we may call *the ladder of the great Descent*, and every step of the ladder is in its right place according to historical order—'Who, being originally in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, be-

coming obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross.'

1. '*Who, being originally in the form of God.*' That these words do not refer to the Incarnate Christ, but to the pre-Incarnate Lord, is freely acknowledged by our best commentators, such as Lightfoot, Meyer, and many more. And as we have already seen, 'the form of God' cannot possibly mean "the attributes of God," as Lightfoot and others have supposed, for at least two reasons. First, if 'form' were equivalent to "attributes," then this must be granted, that as the Father and Holy Ghost have Divine attributes equally with the Son, they also must have 'form,' and yet the term is applied in Scripture *only to the Son*; and second, 'the form of God' as the Divine Man, frequently appeared in Old Testament times, and in every respect spake and acted humanly. Then the term '*originally*' refers to that which had *a beginning*, and not to

the essential *Deity* of the Son which had no beginning. Lightfoot says that the Greek word *ὑπάρχων* "denotes prior existence, but not necessarily eternal existence." Just so, and therefore Paul chose it in preference to any other when referring to 'the Firstborn of all creation,' whose humanity was not eternal.

2. 'Counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God,' or, as we prefer to render it with the American revisers — '*Counted not equality with God a thing to be grasped.*' Now these words absolutely have no meaning if they refer to the Son *as a Divine Being*, and for this simple and all-sufficient reason, that, being Divine, He was already and eternally *equal* with the Father. But if they are rightly regarded as applying to the God-Man, then they are exceedingly beautiful and easily understood, for in His perfect lowliness of heart He appeared as the Divine Man, and did not grasp equality with God. This was

true of Christ, both in His pre-Incarnate and Incarnate states. Though He and the Father were one, yet He neither hastened to declare that oneness, nor insisted on its recognition by those He taught, but patiently waited until, in the natural order of their intellectual growth and spiritual progress, they were prepared to apprehend and receive it.

3. '*But emptied Himself.*' This is a declaration of the very utmost importance, which deserves and demands the most careful, prayerful, and earnest attention. At this point we come to the very core of the great event we are now considering — the Incarnation of Christ. The word 'emptied' would have been better rendered by *stripped* or *divested*, which are the terms used by Lightfoot, Lange, and other able expositors. *Of what, then, did the Lord God divest Himself?* Lightfoot replies: "He divested Himself, not of His divine nature, for this was impossible, but

of the glories and prerogatives of Deity." But why has the worthy Bishop *changed his ground* just at this point? Has he not already told us that "form (μορφῆ) must apply to the *attributes* of the Godhead"? If that be true, then ought he not, in self-consistency, to have said that when the Divine Son of the Father became Incarnate, "He divested Himself," not only of the "glories" and "prerogatives," but also of the *attributes* of Deity? And if form and attributes be synonymous, then surely, in laying aside 'the form of God,' He must also have divested Himself of the attributes of Deity, and by so doing, ceased to be Divine. Is it possible for the attributes of a Person to be laid aside, and the Person Himself remain, to continue thinking and willing, speaking and acting as before? Instead of Personality, there continues to be only an abstraction. That the glories, prerogatives, and attributes of Christ's Divinity were veiled and

limited in Jesus of Nazareth is certain, for, as Canon Gore most truly remarks, "All through the course of His earthly life, Jesus spoke under the limitations of a properly human consciousness"; but to say that He 'emptied' or *stripped* Himself of all these is simply not true. Limitation is one thing, laying aside is another. Had the Christ really been thus self-divested, nothing of His Divine nature could have been left, neither could He have said: 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.' Again then we ask, *Of what did He divest Himself?* Many commentators reply, 'He divested Himself of the *glory* which He had with the Father before the world was.' Now, rightly to understand this answer, it will be necessary to obtain a clear apprehension of what *glory* really is. What then is glory? Glory consists of two things—a hidden substance, and a visible manifestation. Look at the natural sun: it has hidden elements and qualities of

matter which are its essential and internal glory, and it has the outshining splendour of the sunshine which is its external glory. The outward and visible glory is the effect and manifestation of that which is inward and unseen. Think next of the Lord in His pre-Incarnate state—the great Sun of Righteousness, of whom the natural sun is a symbol. He too possessed the twofold glory—the hidden and the visible. When Moses offered the prayer, '*Shew me Thy glory*,' he was at the very moment looking into the face of the Visible God (Exod. xxxiii. 11), and the glory which he wished to see was that which was *outward and visible*. Now, what did the Lord say in reply? He said two things: 'I will make all My *goodness* pass before thee,' and also, 'No man can see My *face* and live.' Goodness is the substance of Glory—the hidden elements and qualities of the moral character which visibly outshone in the person of the Lord when He

chose to manifest it, and which in the great future shall clothe with visible splendour not only His own Person, but also the persons of all His saved and sanctified followers. Did He not say to His disciples, 'Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father' (Matt. xiii. 43). Well, He graciously proclaimed His *goodness*—the *essential* glory—but the outward glory of His *face* in all its fulness of splendour could not be shown. Why? Because of the inability of Moses to bear the sight. Who can gaze at the natural sun in the hour of its meridian splendour? When Paul, on his way to Damascus, saw in vision the glory of the ascended Saviour, *it smote him into blindness*; and when John, in his Patmos vision, was brought into the immediate presence of his glorified Lord, *he fell at His feet as dead.* It was in merciful lovingkindness that the Lord God—the Divine Man—proclaimed His *essential*

glory to His faithful servant Moses, and at the same time *refused* to show him His *outward* glory except in a small degree (Exod. xxxiii. 20–23). Very many of His Old Testament appearances were without the glory, but on other and very special occasions the glory was revealed. If the Incarnation of our Lord had only been the laying aside of the visible glory (the *invisible* glory of His *goodness* could not thus be dealt with), that would have been no new thing in the world, for it had often been laid aside before, and we never read that when He divested Himself of that glory He laid aside for a season 'the form of God.' When thus we come to a clear recognition of what glory really is, we see that 'form' and 'glory' are in no respect equivalent. The sunshine is the glory of the sun, but no one ever thinks or speaks of sunshine as a 'form.' Again then we inquire, *Of what did He divest Himself?* One or two

recent expositors have taken 'form' as signifying "*status*," and believe that it was His "status" which the Lord laid aside. The very fact that so many different opinions are entertained regarding 'the form of God' by our foremost divines and commentators, is sufficient evidence that the meaning of 'form' is not clearly apprehended. Can 'form' and "status," then, be accepted as signifying the same thing? This is the most unsatisfactory explanation of all. 'Form' refers to *visible appearance*, and "status" to *social position*. The special verse in the Old Testament which speaks of the 'form' of the Lord proves this to demonstration. In rebuking Aaron and Miriam for their rebellion against Moses, the Lord Himself said unto them concerning His 'faithful' servant, '*the form of the Lord shall he behold*' (Num. xii. 8). It was therefore *an object that could be seen*. Now, put "status" in the place of 'form,' and it will be

immediately evident how utterly inadmissible it is—'the "*status*" of the Lord shall he *behold*.' Once more then and finally, *Of what did He divest Himself*? We answer at once, *It was the 'form of God' which He laid aside.* He put off that form, that He might put on another. The form of which He divested Himself was 'the form of *God*,' and the form which He received and appropriated was 'the form of a *servant*.' We are not told *how* He put off the former 'form' in order that He might put on the latter, and where Scripture is silent it is not wise for us to speak; but the *fact* of the laying aside of 'the form of God' is plainly stated. What then was the difference between 'the form of God' and 'the form of a servant,' which in Philippians ii. 6, 7 are brought into immediate comparison and contrast? *The former was the Divine Humanity*, the true and perfect humanity of the God-Man; *the latter was a flesh-and-blood*

humanity, such as all living human beings possess at this hour. 'God sent forth His Son born of a woman, born under the law, that He might redeem them who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.' In other words, He who had created all things, and was above the law, in order that He might become the Redeemer of all things was made under the law. He whose original Humanity was spiritual and Divine and received from the Father, now took a humanity which was natural and fleshly and received from His virgin-Mother, for He was 'born of a woman.' He, in whose likeness man was created, was now made 'in the likeness of men.' He came to be the 'servant' of God for humanity's sake, and the servant of men for God's sake. 'Behold My *servant*, whom I uphold; Mine elect, in whom My soul delighteth' (Isa. xlii. 1). 'I am among you as one that serveth' (Luke xxii. 27).

4. '*Being made in the likeness of men.*' These are marvellous words, which we shall do well to consider very carefully. In the minds of those who regard the Incarnation as the descent of Deity into Humanity they simply signify that He became a Man, and therefore do not bear any great weight of special meaning. But when the Incarnation is rightly and scripturally apprehended, and is seen to be the descent of the God-Man into flesh and blood, then they are recognised to be profoundly significant. 'God sent His own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh,' or 'flesh of sin' (Rom. viii. 3). But why 'flesh of sin'? This designation is not given to the 'flesh' merely because sin has corrupted it and so made it 'sinful,' but also, and much more specially, because *but for sin we should not have had flesh-and-blood bodies at all.* It is a common mistake to suppose that the natural flesh-and-blood body, which man at first received, was the

true and final physical constitution of humanity. On the contrary, it was only an initial and temporary state, out of which he was Divinely intended to grow into a spiritual and incorruptible condition, just as the bud or blossom on a fruit tree is evolved by sunshine and rain into fruit. The flesh-and-blood nature which we now possess in our degraded and mortal state is the effect of the Fall, and therefore 'sinful' in itself. In the work of Canon Holland, *On Behalf of Belief* (page 262), he says: "No one who pronounces his faith in these words ('The Word became flesh') can ever suppose for a moment that there is anything radically and inherently base in the flesh—in human nature. For evidently there is no hint of any alteration in the human character of the flesh to make it unfit for God to inhabit. It is our flesh that He became, our nature that He assumed. . . . It was never so human as when

God took it, and therefore never so fully itself as when it was made sinless." Now all this is a mistake. We have flesh-and-blood bodies, but, we repeat, we ought not to have had them. Had our first parents kept their first estate and risen out of the natural into the spiritual condition, their posterity would also have been from the beginning more or less spiritual in their nature, and increasingly so as the race was spiritually developed. But when they sinned, they not only retained their flesh-and-blood bodies, but also degraded them into an unnatural condition, through the corrupting power of moral evil. Therefore, the flesh now is "radically and inherently base," and is indeed and of a truth 'flesh of sin'—'*sinful* flesh.' Now notice, the Incarnate body of the Lord was not 'flesh of sin,' for had it been so, He Himself would have needed salvation; but the angel said unto Mary, 'That which is to be born shall be called *holy*.'

It was a natural flesh-and-blood body like unto that which the first man had before the Fall, and therefore, though made 'in the likeness of men,' was not the final or perfect form of humanity. It was capable of weakness and pain, suffering and death, all of which Jesus endured. It was 'flesh,' and not the true spiritual humanity which He had possessed from before creation, and into the full resemblance of which unfallen man would gradually have been evolved. The Incarnate life of Christ was a life '*in the flesh*,' and because it was so, and after its redemptive purpose had been fulfilled, He left it behind for ever, and passed through Resurrection and Ascension into the true and eternal humanity which He had before the foundation of the world. Therefore, says Paul, not with regret, but rejoicing, 'Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him *so* no more' (2 Cor. v. 16).

5. '*And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself.*' Now there are two words here which ought to receive special attention—'*fashion*' and '*humbled.*' The first word expresses the *transitoriness* of Christ's earthly life and fleshly nature. As Bishop Lightfoot truly says: "Unlike the word '*form*,' this word does not imply the *reality* of our Lord's humanity." Take note of that. 'Form' is the term applied to His *original* Humanity, and '*fashion*' to that which was Incarnate, because it was taken for a special purpose, and only 'for a little while.' Theologians generally regard the appearances of the Divine Man in Old Testament times as merely *apparitional*, and the earthly life of the Incarnate Christ as *truly human*, whereas the very opposite is the truth. The pre-Incarnate appearances were real and truly human, while the earthly life was fleshly and transitory. The second word, 'humbled,' is also worthy of being thoughtfully

pondered. It was a tremendous descent for the God-Man to come down into flesh and blood, but He descended still lower than that. 'Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself.' The whole of His earthly life was a charming manifestation of the humility of love—a downward path of self-forgetfulness and self-sacrifice—which has ever commanded, and must increasingly and eternally command, the reverent admiration and adoring homage of every human being capable of recognising and appreciating what true nobleness and genuine greatness are.

6. '*Became obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross.*' The Divine Man became Incarnate for many purposes, but chiefly for *one*, of which we shall speak immediately. But first of all we shall indicate in few words what some of the other purposes were. *And first—He came to reveal God more nearly and fully than He had ever done before, at least since the Fall.* He

revealed the Divine *Fatherhood* when He said unto all men, 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life'; and when He said to the disciples, 'The Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from the Father.' And surely He revealed the Divine *Motherhood* also when He exclaimed, 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest'; and again when, with aching heart, He wept over the doomed city, and cried, 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not.' The sensitive ear of the loving heart can hear the same voice and the same tones in these tender and pitiful words, which in the ancient time exclaimed, 'Hear, O heaven, and give ear, O earth: I have

nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me.' The Jehovah of the Old Testament was the *Lord* God, and the Jesus of the New Testament said, 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.' 'No man hath seen God at any time; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath *declared* Him.' He 'declared' Him by the words He spake, and by the works which He did (John xiv. 10), but most of all by His life and character: in Him we see and know the Father. *Second—He came that He might carry our sorrows.* 'Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows' (Isa. liii. 4). In relation to the Father Jesus was a Man of joy, but in relation to sinful men He was 'the Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.' Through sympathy—such as no other being ever had—He gathered into His own bosom all the sufferings and sorrows of our race: and because His pity was practical, and His sympathy

active, 'He went about doing good,'—feeding the hungry, healing the sick, comforting the bereaved, pardoning the guilty, enlightening the ignorant, and giving life eternal to all who were willing to receive it. His own words at the commencement of His ministry were these: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He hath sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.' And that manifold and magnificent purpose was fully fulfilled, as the Gospels abundantly testify.

Third, He also came to bear our iniquities. And this He did to the uttermost, not merely by pitying the wicked, and pardoning the penitent, but also by taking to Himself, and making His own, the entire wrongdoing of humanity. Is not this the teaching of the Word, 'Be ye recon-

ciled to God; for Him who knew no sin He made to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him' (2 Cor. v. 21). Yes, He made Him 'to be *Sin* on our behalf.' It was the guilt of the race which He appropriated, and carried to the cross, that there He might 'put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself' (Heb. ix. 26). 'He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world' (1 John ii. 2). And now we stand face to face with the *supreme* purpose which He had in view when He became Incarnate. That purpose *was to Die.* 'Becoming obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross.' These words declare, not only that He was perfectly obedient to the Father until He died, but also and chiefly that *Death was the purpose of His life*—a purpose which He did not fail to fulfil. His Crucifixion began with His Incarnation, and the Divinely-appointed end of His Incarnation was the de-

cease He accomplished at Jerusalem. The Father sent Him to die; Jesus Himself said so: 'Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life that I might take it again: no one taketh it away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself; I have power (right) to lay it down, and I have power to take it again; this commandment received I from My Father' (John x. 17, 18). There are those who believe and teach that though Jesus had never been crucified at all, His lofty teaching and beneficent life and perfectly beautiful character would in process of time have saved and sanctified humanity. But this is absolutely contrary to the entire tenor and teaching of the Word of God. Redemption was man's great necessity, and not education and development merely; and that redemption could be effected by none but Christ, and only through the laying down of His life, for in no other way could the result of sin be borne, and sin itself

taken away. Let no mistake be made here, for just at this point we touch the very core of Christianity, and the essence of the Gospel. 'This commandment received I from My Father,' —to lay down My life. 'Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same, that *through death* He might bring to nought,' etc. (Heb. ii. 14). Crucifixion was the Divinely-appointed end of His Incarnation, and death the purpose of His life. He was not sent to die a natural death, like other men, for two reasons at least: *First*—Because, although His body was natural like that of Adam before the Fall, it was not corrupted like Adam's body after the Fall, and therefore there was in it no principle or element of decay to take Him down into dissolution; and *Second*—being personally sinless, the law had no claim against Him. He did not deserve to die, and death Divinely inflicted upon Him

would have been a huge injustice. And yet God sent Him to die—'This *commandment* received I from My Father.' Why was this commandment given? Was it not that humanity might be redeemed? The curse of violated law lay upon every individual of the race, and that law could not be righteously set aside *even by God*, because it was the embodiment and expression of His own perfect and therefore unchanging will. It was 'holy, just, and good,' and having been violated by man, he was no longer able to meet its requirements, and could only bear the penalty of disobedience. But what was not possible to man the sinner was gloriously possible to Man the Sinless—the holy Saviour. He was at once the Creator and the Lawgiver, and if He (as the Head of the race) freely chose, through a natural birth, to take a natural flesh-and-blood body, that on behalf of the guilty He might by His life of obedience magnify the

law, and then by His death bear its penalty, He could thus become the Redeemer. And this was just what He did. 'Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us' (Gal. iii. 13). 'He suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God' (1 Pet. iii. 18). 'Ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things . . . but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ' (1 Pet. i. 18, 19). The advocates of what is called the Moral theory of the Atonement do not disparage the blood, but they regard the shedding thereof as only a glorious exhibition of Divine love. This, we think, is a defective view of the great Sacrifice. It is true that the death of Christ was a sublime manifestation of Infinite love, but why was this *particular* manifestation of it *a necessity*? Why did it please the Father to '*bruise* the Son and put Him to grief'? Be-

cause '*He made His soul an offering for sin.*' Whatever theory men may either construct or adopt of the meaning and effects of Christ's death, it ought to be in harmony with the facts, which are these: 'He suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God.' No blessing could be bestowed on men which would meet their need in all its length and breadth but the blessing of deliverance from sin, and this glorious deliverance was brought to us by His death. The death of Christ was not an arbitrary demand on the part of God, as some have supposed, and who, on the ground of their own misapprehension, have dared to speak of Him as a bloodthirsty Tyrant, and of Christianity as a religion of blood. It was not imposed for His own satisfaction, but was absolutely necessary for man's redemption, *for only by the shedding of Christ's blood and the sacrifice of His life could violated law be honoured and*

the curse of that violation lawfully removed. In view of all that the Scriptures have declared concerning the *necessity* of Christ's death, we profoundly regret the easy way in which Christian men sometimes speak of it as if it had merely been an unfortunate accident and calamity which need never have happened if circumstances had only been more propitious. For instance, the Rev. Dr. Stalker, in his excellent *Imago Christi* (p. 64), says: "If the Jewish people instead of rejecting had welcomed Him, what would have happened? Would He have set up His throne in Jerusalem, and made the whole world subject to it? Was it only when they had made it impossible for Him to reign over them that He turned aside from what appeared to be His destiny, and limited Himself to a kingdom not of this world? It is impossible to read Christ's life intelligently without asking such questions as these. Yet it is vain to ask them, for they

cannot be answered." We regard these words as not only very mistaken, but also fitted to effect a large amount of mischief. Young inquirers and sceptical persons may very naturally draw from them the conclusion that an atoning Sacrifice was not needed for men, and that if the Jews had only received Jesus as their Messiah, He would at once have become their King, "set up His throne in Jerusalem, and made the whole world subject to it." But instead of this "seeming to be His destiny," the predictions of psalmists and prophets (Ps. xvi. and Isa. liii.) and His own declarations regarding Himself (John viii. 28, xii. 27) show that the cross on Calvary, and not a throne in Jerusalem, was the Divinely-appointed end of His Incarnation and earthly ministry. Was it not at the beginning of that ministry, and not at its close, before He was known to either the people or their rulers, and not after they had rejected Him as their Messiah,

that He said to Nicodemus, 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up'? (John iii. 14). There was a *must* in the matter—and why? Because, for the redemption of our race, His death was a necessity. The impression made by Dr. Stalker's words just quoted is not removed by what he afterwards says (p. 67): "The life of Jesus appeared to miscarry. He who was meant to be a King was held unworthy to live even as a subject; instead of inhabiting a palace He was consigned to a prison; instead of being seated on a throne, He was nailed to a tree. But although this was a miscarriage, in so far as it was due to the wicked will of men, it was no miscarriage in the wisdom of God. Looked at from man's side, the death of Christ was the blackest spot on human history, a mistake and a crime without parallel; but looked at from God's side, it is the grandest scene in the history

of the universe ; for in it human sin was expiated, the depths of the Divine love disclosed, and the path of perfection opened for the children of men." Had this beautifully expressed passage not been preceded by the other, it might have passed without remark ; but in the light of the other it is liable to very serious misconstruction. If Christ's death effected the sublime results which it mentions, was not death then the purpose of His birth—the purpose of God ? And if so, how can it be truly said that Jesus "was meant to be a King"—that "it was His destiny not to be the private man He was, but to be the Head of an emancipated and glorious state"—that "His offer of Himself to be the Messiah of His country was a *bonâ fide* offer," and that when the Jews rejected Him, "then the tide of His life turned and rolled back upon itself" ? Surely, if He came to die as a Saviour, He did not come to reign as a King ; or if He

were designed to be "the Head of an emancipated and glorious state," then His death at the hands of the Jewish people and the Roman Government was an untoward and deplorable event which ought not to have happened. It was just like God to utilize their awful crime for the unfolding of His merciful love; but if the crime had not been committed—what then? O sirs! let us be loyal to the Scriptures. 'The Father sent the Son *to be the Saviour of the world.*' 'I lay down My life for the sheep.' '*This commandment received I from My Father.*' 'Behoved it not the Christ *to suffer these things*, and to enter into His glory?' These, and a multitude of similar passages in the Word, are conclusive.

The same mistake which the Apostolic Fathers made in relation to the Jehovah of the Old Testament has been repeated by theologians and commentators in relation to the Jesus of

the New, the mistake of making Him *too great*—greater than He was. In proof of this, take the following words of Canon Gore in *The Incarnation*, etc. (p. 167): "In Jesus Christ *humanity was perfect.* . . . In Him humanity is not only free from taint, *but in the moral and spiritual region also at the goal of development.* In Him first, we see man *completely in the image of God, realizing all that was in the Divine idea for man.*" These words refer not to the risen and glorified Saviour, but to Jesus of Nazareth in the days of His flesh, and we hesitate not to say that they are a complete misapprehension of the truth, and altogether out of harmony with the plain declarations of the Word. It tells us that He was made 'in the likeness of sinful flesh,' but where does it teach that "*In Him first, we see man completely in the image of God*"? It tells us that 'He was made perfect through sufferings'; but where are we told that "in Him

humanity was *perfect*," or that "in the moral and spiritual region also (He was) *at the goal of development*"? It is true that He was personally sinless, and therefore 'separate from sinners'; but it is also true that He was one with us *as we now are*—bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. The true greatness of His Incarnation *lay in the depth of His humiliation.* While the Church has taught us that God became Man, and that as Man He was perfect, the New Testament tells us that He laid aside 'the form of God' to take 'the form of a servant'—that He became poor (or beggared Himself) for our sakes—that He was 'made in the likeness of flesh of sin,' and that He was also 'made perfect through sufferings.' There was no *defect* in Christ at any period of His life or in any stage of His growth, for in Him was no sin, and therefore no defect; and yet, both as man and Saviour, He was imperfect.

Take His *physical nature* first. It was flesh and blood; which are not the *perfect* nature of man, therefore He *left* them behind Him. Through His 'sufferings' on the cross He shed His blood and gave up His natural life, and then through resurrection He attained to the *spiritual* bodily state which is the *perfect* nature of man. Look next at *His moral character.* Instead of being "at the goal of development," 'though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered, *and having been made perfect*, He became unto all them that obeyed Him the author of eternal salvation' (Heb. v. 8). Then finally, *as a Saviour* He was also *made* perfect through sufferings. In His message to Herod Jesus said, 'Go and say to that fox, Behold I cast out devils, and perform cures to-day and to-morrow, *and the third day I am perfected*' (Luke xiii. 32). And the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, 'By one

offering He hath *perfected* for ever them that are sanctified' (Heb. x. 14). 'Christ suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God: being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the Spirit; in which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which aforetime were disobedient, when the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah.' . . . 'For unto this end was the gospel preached even to the dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit' (1 Pet. iii. 18–20, and iv. 6). 'Neither was He left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption' (Acts ii. 31). 'Now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead' (1 Cor. xv. 20, 21). 'He led them out until they were over against Bethany: and He lifted

up His hands and blessed them. And it came to pass while He blessed them He parted from them, and was carried up into heaven' (Luke xxiv. 50, 51). 'He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things' (Eph. iv. 10). Yes, 'That He might fill *all things*'—all hearts and homes, all churches and institutions, all tribes and nations, all the earth and heavens, with His own fulness, 'for it hath pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell' (Col. i. 19). In the days of His flesh Jesus for a little while 'was *lower* than the angels' (Heb. ii. 9), but God 'raised Him from the dead, and made Him to sit at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come' (Eph. i. 20, 21). 'God also hath highly exalted Him, and gave unto Him the

name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father' (Phil. ii. 9–11). *From beginning to end, the whole of the work of the Divine Son on behalf of the Eternal Father,* IS MEDIATORIAL. Creation was a mediatorial work, and was finished in the beginning: 'the heaven and the earth were finished, and all the host of them' (Gen. ii. 1). Redemption was a mediatorial work, and was finished on Calvary: 'I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do' (John xvii. 4). 'He said, It is finished, and He bowed His head, and gave up His spirit' (John xix. 30). The work of personal salvation now being carried on is a mediatorial work, and one day it also shall be finished, and 'Then cometh the end,

when He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all His enemies under His feet' (1 Cor. xv. 24, 25). It was of this that our late Poet Laureate so grandly sang:

> "That God, which ever lives and loves,
> One God, one law, one element,
> And one far-off divine event,
> To which the whole creation moves."

Before His departure from earth, Jesus said to His disciples, 'It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send Him unto you.' . . . 'He shall glorify Me: for He shall take of Mine, and shall declare it unto you' (John xvi. 7, 14). And on the day of Pentecost Peter said unto the multitudes gathered together in Jerusalem, 'This Jesus did

God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses. Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath poured forth this which ye see and hear' (Acts ii. 22, 23). As the Son came to reveal the Father, so the Spirit has come to reveal the Son: 'He shall glorify Me.' He reveals Christ and effects all spiritual results, through the instrumentality of gospel truth: 'He shall take of Mine, and shall declare it unto you.' 'When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father, He shall bear witness of Me' (John xv. 26).

Christian brethren, let us be filled with the Spirit. 'If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?' (Matt. vii. 11).

If we wish truly and increasingly to know the Son, that in Him we may know the Father, whom to know is life eternal (John xvii. 3), let us give abundant opportunity to 'the Spirit of truth' to make us wise unto salvation through the constant and devout study of the sacred Scriptures. 'Sanctify them in the truth: Thy word is truth' (John xvii. 17). 'Long for the spiritual milk, . . . that ye may grow thereby unto salvation' (1 Pet. ii. 2).

To our brethren in the flesh we would say, Pass over from the old race, which is corrupt and perishing, to the new race of the Twice-born, of which the glorified Saviour is the Head. 'Put off the old man' and 'put on the new' (Eph. iv. 22–24) by becoming 'new creatures' through faith in Christ (2 Cor. v. 17). Believe His gospel, receive Himself as your own personal Saviour, and become partakers of the Holy Ghost; 'for if any man have not the Spirit of

Christ, he is none of His' (Rom. viii. 9). And when you become the children of faith, let your faith be developed into love, and your love into obedience and service, that ye may grow in grace and in knowledge, and have the concurrent testimony of God's Spirit with your own spirit that you are His. And thus receiving and reciprocating the love of the Father, you will know the Father Himself, for 'God is Love,' and love only can apprehend, appropriate and appreciate love. 'He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is Love' (1 John iv. 8). 'And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ' (Rom. viii. 17).

Before closing this chapter we shall put together, for purposes of comparison and contrast, the current Christology of the Catholic Church, and that which we have endeavoured to state with all brevity, simplicity and fulness in the preceding pages. Consider them well.

The Old.	*The New.*
1. That the Son of God, as the Father's Agent, created all things *as God.*	1. That the Lord God, as the Father's Agent, created all things *as the God-Man.*
2. That all His O.T. Theophanies *were apparitional.*	2. That all His O.T. Appearances *were real.*
3. That the Incarnation was *the descent of Deity into Humanity.*	3. That the Incarnation was *the descent of the God-Man into 'flesh.'*
4. That the Humanity of the Incarnate One *was perfect.*	4. That the flesh-and-blood humanity of the Incarnate One was *'made perfect through sufferings.'*

The difference between the two Christologies is immense; and if the New be as true and Scriptural as we believe it to be, then it must necessarily in process of time effect *results* of a very far-reaching and important character.

We had just finished the foregoing chapter when we received from London a newly published book entitled *The God-Man*, by Dr. T. C. Edwards, Principal of the Theological College, Bala. Its title interested and excited us, and therefore without delay we read it carefully and with large expectations of finding in it something fresh, enlightening and satisfying. It is a scholarly production, and manifestly the outcome of a large amount of reading and thinking, and yet we found in it only the old ideas in a new

setting. Instead of characterizing the work as a whole, or criticising any of its special passages, we shall put before our readers a few important quotations, and leave them to estimate their value for themselves. On pages 6, 7, we find the following: "In Philippians ii. 6 the Apostle Paul speaks of the Person who took 'the form of a servant' as being in 'the form of God,' and Bengel, with his usual felicity, remarks that, though the expressions 'to be in the form of God' and 'to be equal with God,' do not mean 'to be God,' still He who was in the form of God and was equal with God, *is* God. But, the apostle says, He who was equal with God thought not of grasping that equality. Here we have equality and subordination." On pages 15, 16: "The properties which the Son has and the Father has not, are origination and subordination. Thus it comes to pass that the Son is to us *the revelation of God's humanity* in two quite

distinct forms: first, in what the Trinity and man have in common; and second, in what the Son in the Trinity and man have in common. The Son is 'the image of the invisible God'; *He represents God to man in having and manifesting the attributes of wisdom, justice, love, etc.* But the Son is also 'the firstborn of all creation'; for He it is who in God is *the Archetype of man in the peculiar possession of origination and subordination.* He does not come into existence in time by creation, but He is eternally in that dynamic relation to the Father which is implied in the πρὸς τὸν Θεόν of John, a generation from the Father and a movement to the Father. Yet this constitutes Him the Archetype of all persons that are created." On pages 18, 19: "The Son therefore is the image, both as representation and as manifestation of the unseen God, and He is the Archetype of the not yet created Man. Whatever is involved in the Son's being the

image of God, He has the image in common with man; and man has God's image in common with the Logos, and according to the apostle's view, as God's image exists in the Logos. *The image therefore means, not any corporeal form, but rather personal, spiritual, and morally-free existence, which is consequently immortal.*" On pages 24, 25: "If we say that the Father is unknown until He is revealed in the Son, we are expressing one of the truths of Christianity. *In this respect we are all 'content to remain Agnostics'*; or as Hooker said, 'Our soundest knowledge of the Most High is to know that we know Him not indeed as He is, neither can know Him. That revelation which the Son brings us of the Father is certified to us by a power which the New Testament calls *faith*.' This is a very different thing from the assertion that 'the power which the universe manifests to us is utterly inscrutable, in which the difference of subject and object dis-

appears.' *Christ reveals God by telling us that He is Father.*" On page 40: "Jesus of Nazareth is, in some sense, the Logos of the Father, the eternal Son of God. *In what sense*, we may not as yet be able to comprehend. Still, we have enough to keep us from intellectual doubt, spiritual despair, or moral badness. Believing prayer is possible." On page 83: "We must admit that the subject of an incarnation, *apart from sin*, is not clearly revealed in Scripture." On pages 129, 130: "The *Kenosis* consists of two successive steps. The first step was the laying aside 'the form of God,' and this act the apostle dates back into the pre-incarnate state of the Logos. It was an infinite act of self-denial, than which a lesser would have been impossible to Him, as well as incapable of being revealed as an ethical example to men. Then, *when He had divested Himself of His* METAPHYSICAL OMNIPOTENCE as Son of God, and was 'found in fashion as a man,' He

humbled Himself—an expression properly applicable only to a man or the Logos as man—and He humbled Himself more than would have been possible to any mere man or angel, however perfect, and however much aided by the Spirit of God. For our Lord's *moral omnipotence* still remained to Him, and the help of the Spirit was added, which things enabled Him to become obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross, and rendered His obedience redemptive—priestly and sacrificial. The contrast between the form of God and the obedience unto death, even the death of the cross, is infinite, for redemptive reasons." On pages 153, 154: "Our argument ends where it began. If an ideal humanity existed necessarily and eternally in God, it became an actual humanity at the incarnation. The God-Man is not, as Hegel said, a monstrosity. A complex personality like Christ's is possible. If it be asked whether He is God or Man, the

answer must be, Both in One. He was *in idea* from eternity, *God-Man.* He is and will be to eternity, *actual God-Man.*" (The italics are ours.)

These extracts contain the essence of all that Dr. Edwards has to tell us concerning the nature of Christ; and if our readers can either understand what they mean, or find that they throw any fresh illumination on the Christological Scriptures, it is more than we have been able to do.

CHAPTER VI

PRACTICAL RESULTS

IT is just as true of Christian doctrines as of professing Christians, that 'by their fruits ye shall know them.' When the old and new Christologies are thus tested and judged, there is much to be said in favour of the latter. That this may be clearly seen, let us briefly indicate what the fruits of the one have been and what those of the other are likely to be.

The old Christology, originated by some of the apostolic Fathers, and still believed and taught by modern orthodoxy (as *The God-Man*, by Principal Edwards, published a few days ago

testifies), has borne some notable fruits, the eating of which has not ministered much either to the mental health or moral stamina of humanity. *First of all, it teaches this, That the Infinite and Invisible God was revealed to men, not by a personal and visible Manifestation of the Son*—who, being equally Divine, and therefore equally invisible with the Father, could not thus reveal Him—*but only through the medium of Creation and Revelation.* This extraordinary doctrine has developed abundant fruit in both the Church and the world, and it has not proved itself to be wholesome or nourishing. It is an awful doctrine, when fairly faced and rightly apprehended. As we have previously shown, a great house, even with a good library, is not a home. It needs the visible presence of a loving father and mother to make it worthy of the name, and also to make the dwellers in it contented and happy. A little girl was one day weeping bitterly on one of the

streets of London. A kind-hearted policeman went to her, and said, "What ails you, my little maid?" "I want to go home," she sobbingly replied. "And where is your home, my darling?" "Where mother is," was the touching and beautiful answer. Now, what would all the children of the Eternal Father-Mother have been, even in an unfallen condition, had not the Invisible God been visibly manifested to them by the Great Revealer—the God-Man? Surely, they would have realized the desolation of orphanhood, and been impelled to exclaim, even in Eden itself, "We want to go home." By the rejection or non-recognition of the great and glorious fact of the Divine Humanity from before creation, the Father has been put far away from His offspring, and remained to them in large measure the Great Unknown. And this He must have continued to be for ever, but for the fall of man. It was sin which necessitated Incarnation, and

brought the Divine Son as the Divine Man to tabernacle amongst us. And then, but not till then, the God who is 'afar off' was 'brought nigh.' Such is the teaching of the old Christology. Some of the apostolic Fathers tried to meet this great difficulty by supposing that the Divine Son would have become Incarnate though sin had never existed, and not a few of our modern theologians have revived the idea; but, as Dr. Edwards truly says in *The God-Man* (p. 83), "We must admit that the subject of an incarnation apart from sin is not clearly revealed in Scripture." He might safely have gone a great deal further, and asserted, with Dr. Denny in his *Studies in Theology* (p. 101), that "Scripture never gives the faintest hint of any opening for the mind in this direction." Oh, no; there never would have been an Incarnation but for sin; and if so (seeing that according to the old Christology there was no Visible God in the universe

until then), who would hesitate to exclaim, Thank God for the Fall, and the introduction of sin into the world, for thereby the Father, through the Son, has been brought forth from His eternal hiddenness, and answered the universal and instinctive cry of the human heart, 'Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us'? But again, *the old Christology teaches this, That all the Theophanies of the Old Testament times were merely apparitional.* Now, human beings have never felt at home with visible ghosts or ghostly appearances of any kind which never fail to create fear and trembling. Look at the disciples in the upper room, when Jesus suddenly appeared in their midst after His resurrection. 'They were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they beheld a spirit' (Luke xxiv. 37). Now if the Old Testament appearances had been apparitional, would not those who beheld them have been equally terrified? and yet we do not read that they were. It is

true that 'Moses hid his face in the desert, because he was afraid to look upon (the Visible) God'; but his fear arose from the fact that he had never seen the Lord before, and that He appeared to him *in glory*. The Lord God usually came as 'a man,' and generally in the most natural and human-like fashion. But the apparitional idea still holds its ground in modern theology and in the minds of Christians generally, and therefore the so-called Theophanies have never greatly interested them nor proved an attractive study, even when they have believed in their reality. And thus again, by the rejection of the original Divine Humanity God has been put far away from men and all His mediatorial dealings with them made repellently mysterious. Once more, *the old Christology has put even the Incarnate Saviour far away from sinners, by making Him altogether different from other men.* It makes Him not only the sinless One, but also the Divine

and Perfect Man, and therefore a Being to whom it was both natural and easy to speak and act as He did. By failing to apprehend the sublime fact that He did not become Man, but 'flesh' —that as such He was one with us as we now are (sin excepted)—that He was not perfect either as a man or a Saviour, but had to be 'made perfect through sufferings,' and that in passing through that process He did not find it either natural or easy to do the Divine will, or endure the sufferings which fell upon Him (His cries and tears in Gethsemane are sufficient evidence of that), verily! the results of the old Christology have been both baneful and blighting in their influence upon men!

Let us now think of the Christology, which we have stated in the preceding pages, and briefly consider what are likely to be its results when it comes to be generally and clearly apprehended, and has taken the place of the old. All its con-

ceivable and possible results need not here be specified, but only a few of the chief.

1. *When the true Christology is understood and accepted, it will clear away the dense mist of perplexing mystery which lies upon the Old Testament Scriptures when they speak of the visible appearances of the Lord God.* Those appearances will no longer be regarded either as legendary myths, or apparitional visitations, or subjective visions on the part of those who saw them; but be recognised as the real and natural, the beautiful and beneficent comings of Him who was the great Mediator between God and men, and therefore the Revealer of the Father. In a paper recently issued in *The North American Review*, Professor Goldwin Smith inquires, "Why should we force ourselves to believe that the Being who fills Eternity and Infinity became the guest of a Hebrew sheikh?" This is a reference to the sublime narrative contained in Genesis xviii. Now, but

for the false teaching which men have received, it is very improbable that that foolish question would ever have been asked, either by a learned professor or anybody else. If the questioner had only known his Bible better than he seems to do, and been instructed in the knowledge of the true Christology, he would have known that the Scriptures never suggest that "the Being who fills Eternity and Infinity became the guest (either) of a Hebrew sheikh," or any other person. He is the God 'whom no man hath seen, *nor can see.*' But the Image of the Invisible God *as Divine Man* appeared unto many in the olden time, and 'spake to them face to face, as a man with his friend.' It was He who became the guest of Abraham at Mamre; and in view of the purpose which He came to accomplish on that occasion, His partaking of the meal which Sarah prepared, and the long interview He held with His 'friend' (Jas. ii. 23), were charmingly beautiful,

and altogether worthy of His nature and character both as God and Man. It is still true that 'the foolishness of God is wiser than men,' and that philosophers generally, from the days of Philo until now, are frequently the last to see clearly the teachings of Divine Revelation (Matt. ii. 25, 26; and Col. ii. 8). One of the sublimest facts recorded in the Bible is detailed in Exodus xxiv. 9–11, and runs thus: 'Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: and they saw the God of Israel: and there was under His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were the very heaven for clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel He laid not His hand: and they beheld God, and did eat and drink.' A flippant writer in one of the London religious weeklies recently called this story "*a barbaric myth.*" We wonder if he would also have given the same descriptive title to the following nar-

rative in Revelation i. 12–18, which bears a very striking resemblance to the one in Exodus xxiv. 9–11 : 'I turned to see the voice which spake with me. And having turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks ; and in the midst of the candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about at the breasts with a golden girdle. His head and hair were white as wool, white as snow ; and His eyes were as a flame of fire ; and His feet like unto burnished brass, as if it had been refined in a furnace ; and His voice as the voice of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars : and out of His mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword : and His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as one dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying, Fear not ; I am the first and the last, and the Living One : and I was dead ; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, and I

have the keys of death and of Hades.' If the story in Exodus is "a barbaric myth," so likewise surely must be this in Revelation ; and if so, then everything supernatural may be frankly rejected, and the Bible, as a Divine Revelation, put upon the shelf. A London preacher a little while ago, in speaking of the wrestling of Jacob with the angel of the Lord at Peniel, is reported to have said, "We are not called upon to take this incident literally." Why not? Apart from the halo of mystery which surrounds it, it reads like a story of intense literality. If all the wonderful and supernatural events of the Old Testament are thus to be dealt with, the marvels of the New Testament will soon be treated in the same way. Indeed, many daring persons have already commenced that awful operation, and the blame, we think, may largely be laid at the doors of our theologians and preachers who teach that the Old Testament appearances of the God-Man were

either apparitional, or the subjective visions which men and women realized in seasons of unusual mental or spiritual excitement. On what reasonable grounds can we object to men regarding all the post-resurrection appearances of Christ as apparitional or visional, if we ourselves thus regard His Old Testament appearances, which are recorded as having been equally real? Yea, more, they were not only equally real, but also as truly human, for He manifested Himself in them all *in a similar way.* By a right understanding of the real Christology of Scripture, a large amount of unmeaning mystery is utterly dispelled, like cold and frosty fogs before the beams of the rising sun. Only let the sublime fact be recognised that the great Mediator was God-Man, and then all the appearances recorded will be easily accepted, not only as real, but also as beautiful. As facts of history—being supernatural—they must still continue to be mysterious

in measure, but not more so than many other events connected with the Risen and Glorified Son of Man, which every evangelical Christian unhesitatingly believes.

2. *When the true Christology is understood and accepted, all the passages in both the Old and New Testaments which refer to the nature of Jehovah-Jesus will be seen to be in perfect and beautiful harmony.* Indeed, the harmony becomes a charming unity—a unity which loudly testifies not only to the reality of the occurrences reported, but also to the guidance of the Divine Spirit by whose enlightening and inspiring power so many different men, in so many different ages, were enabled to write as they did about things so uncommon and strange. When we read together such Scriptures as Genesis xviii. and Luke xxiv., we instinctively feel that we are in the presence of the same august Person, and notice that His looks and words and actions are remarkably similar. And

out of the very depths of admiring and adoring hearts we feel impelled to exclaim, 'Let me see Thy countenance, let me hear Thy voice; for sweet is Thy voice, and Thy countenance is comely.'

3. *When the true Christology is understood and accepted, it will utterly uproot Arianism, Unitarianism, and every form of doctrine which denies the essential Deity of the Christ.* Had it not been for the mistaken interpretations of the Christological Scriptures made by the apostolic Fathers, and the fiercely dogmatic way in which their different opinions were proclaimed, it is more than likely that these isms would never have had an existence. And we doubt not that when the true Christology comes to be generally apprehended by Christian people, these and all similar isms will perish. The Infinite and Invisible God could never have become known unto men without a finite and visible Manifestation, and no

created being—however great—could thus reveal Him. Only the Divine Son had seen and known the Father, or could reveal Him; and even He could reveal Him by Personal and Visible Manifestation only by taking into union with His Divinity the nature and form of Man. In other words, a being *less* than God could not truly reveal God, neither could a Being *only* Divine reveal the Father to His finite children; therefore, before creation and for mediatorial ends, the Son became 'the Image of the Invisible God,' and 'the Firstborn of all creation.' In His Incarnate state He said, 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father,' and 'He that knoweth the Son knoweth the Father also'; but had Philip's request been made to Him in the ancient times by Adam or Abraham, Moses or Isaiah, He could have given the same reply. What do Unitarians or any other persons know about God beyond what Jesus has made known to them? And be-

cause He knew whence He came and whither He was going, even from God to God, He demanded that all men should 'honour the Son, *even as* they honour the Father.' Now Unitarians fail to do this. They worship the Father as the only living and true God, and give to Jesus Christ only the honour of admiration and imitation as a man, or the greatest of created beings, or a demigod who stands related to the Father they know not how. The ideas of Unitarianism are Christ-degrading and God-dishonouring conceptions, for did not Jesus say, 'He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father who has sent Him'? (John v. 23). God is not rightly honoured by men unless they give to Him love and obedience, service and adoring worship; and how can such honour be properly rendered to the Son if He also were not Divine like the Father? Fortunately, Unitarianism is such a coldly-intellectual system of belief, that all

through the Christian ages it has been cordially embraced and taught only by a comparatively few individuals. It brings winter into the heart; and when the clear and warm sunshine of the true Christology is received by the Catholic Church, all its dead and unproductive frost-crystals will quickly melt away for ever.

4. *When the true Christology is understood and taught, it will meet and may probably remove from many minds the chief objection of the Jews to Christianity.* Those of them who have not become atheists or agnostics, but who still reverence the religion of their fathers, cling tenaciously to the *unity* of God, and are right in so doing. It was the Lord Himself, through Moses, who taught them to do so—'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord' (Deut. vi. 4). When Christian missionaries go to the Jewish people with the gospel, they are invariably met with the taunt that they have three Gods, and that therefore

Christianity cannot be true. Now the very first thing the missionary ought to do is to frankly and rejoicingly acknowledge the Divine Unity. Jehovah was 'the one Lord' of the Old Testament dispensation, and Jesus is 'the one Lord' of the New. They are the same Person. Jesus claimed to be the great 'I AM' (John viii. 58). And who was the '*I am that I am*'? He was the Jehovah (see margin of Exodus iii. 15)—'The Lord, the God of your fathers' (Exod. iii. 14–16). And did not the risen and glorified Saviour say to John, 'I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God, who is, was, and is to come, the Almighty'? (Rev. i. 8.) Those to whom the words in John viii. 58 were addressed perfectly understood their meaning; and not believing His testimony concerning Himself, they immediately proceeded to stone Him for blasphemy (John viii. 59). Nevertheless, the claim which He made was fully substantiated by the truths He taught, the

life He lived, the character He manifested, and the beneficent and miraculous works He performed. While these things are being explained by the Christian teacher, and urged upon the consideration of his Jewish auditors, let him not fail to point out that Jesus was Jehovah Incarnate—the Virgin-born Messiah promised unto the fathers. And if they insist—as they are almost certain to do—that in Christ's own teachings a Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is proclaimed, and that consequently He could not be the Jehovah who instructed their fathers to understand that the only living and true God is 'one Lord'—to this apparently formidable objection two things ought to be said in reply: *first*, that the Trinity of Christ's gospel was embodied in the Unity of Christ Himself, for 'in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily' (Col. ii. 9); and *second*, that in the Unity of the Jehovah—the 'one Lord'—the Godhead was likewise em-

bodied, as their own Old Testament Scriptures abundantly testify. Did not the Creator say, 'Let *Us* make man in *Our* image'? Are we not told that 'Jehovah rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire, from Jehovah out of heaven'? Is not the Old Testament Benediction a three-fold unity like that of the New? (Num. vi. 24–26, and 2 Cor. xiii. 14.) Is it not written in the 110th Psalm, that 'The Lord said unto My Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool'? These and many other passages in the Bible prove to demonstration that in the Unity of the Lord God—the great 'I Am'—there was the same Trinity as in Jesus Christ. Let all this be fully declared and patiently explained to the heart-veiled children of Abraham, and their supreme objection to Christianity will not only be fairly met, but may also be finally removed. And now that current political events and the chronological

prophecies of Scripture are unitedly declaring that Turkey is tottering to its fall—that the return of the Jews to Palestine is at hand, and indeed has already begun ; and that the Coming of the Lord draweth nigh—it is surely fitting that the glorious gospel of Christ should now be offered to the Jews with more earnestness and urgency than ever before.

5. *When the true Christology is generally believed and accepted, a new Theology will soon be given to the Church and the world—a theology far more simple, believable, and practical than the old.* It has often been said that while all the sciences have been progressing by leaps and bounds, the queen of them all has been almost standing still. There is no doubt a good deal of exaggeration in this statement, which is sometimes spoken with a sneer ; and yet it contains far too much truth to permit us either to deny it or to remain contented with our theology as it is. When one reads the

writings of the Fathers, and knows what they believed, it is surprising to find how many of their opinions continue to be reproduced even in the ablest theological works of the present day. We are almost impelled to exclaim, 'There is nothing new under the sun!' And theology ought always to be new by being progressive. Christianity, though old and unchanging, is always new, because it is a Divine Revelation which continues and shall continue for ever to reveal; therefore theology—which is the human interpretation of religion—ought to be clear, definite, and progressive. Why then is it not any of these, but misty, confused, and halting? Our reply is this: *A true, simple, and progressive Theology is impossible until a correct Christology has been attained.* And why? Because, in Christ's own words, 'Neither doth any know the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him' (Matt. xi. 27). It is only as men truly know

Christ that they can really know God. Now the current theology *in relation to the nature of Christ* is nothing less than a confused and perplexing metaphysical mystery, as *The God-Man*, by Principal Edwards (just published), sufficiently testifies. We wish that every one who may read what we have here written would also read that book, that the old and new Christologies might thus be compared and contrasted. The old produces in the minds of most people who study it an utter bewilderment concerning the nature of Christ, and leads many of them to give it up altogether until the theologians come to a measure of agreement among themselves, and can produce something understandable. And what is still worse, the consideration of the Christological Scriptures is also given up by many earnest Christians, under the conviction that they are too deep and mysterious to be apprehended by ordinary mortals. This is a great evil, which works

a vast amount of mischief. Jesus said, 'I am the Truth,' and 'He that knoweth Me knoweth the Father'; but the result of a metaphysical theology, grounded upon a false and unscriptural Christology, has led to this in the case of multitudes—that they have relinquished the pursuit of the knowledge of Christ's nature, and therefore remain to a large extent in unnecessary ignorance of God. When the Christology of Scripture comes to be rightly known, men will see the relationship of Christ to the Father on the one hand, and to themselves on the other, and clearly recognise that the great Mediator, Creator, and Redeemer is indeed and of a truth 'the Altogether Lovely.' But not only will earnest and devout students of the Scriptures be immensely benefited by a truly understandable and believable theology —multitudes of others also will thereby have their path cleared to the belief of the Bible as a Divinely inspired Revelation, and to the joyful

acceptance of Christ as the great Mediator between God and man, and the only Saviour of humanity. Take *men of science*, for instance. The study of Nature ought to reveal to them the existence and operation of Deity, 'for the invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even His everlasting power and Divinity' (Rom. i. 20). But many, alas! fail to see God in His works; and if they do not become open and avowed atheists, they declare themselves to be agnostics, or know-nothings, in relation to God and the Hereafter. Now what does Jesus say?—'I and My Father are One'—'I know the Father'—'I have seen the Father'—'I came forth from God'—'The Father sent Me'—'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father'—'He that knoweth the Son knoweth the Father also.' This is a clear and simple testimony—a testimony which millions and millions

of human beings, including many of the wisest and best who have ever lived, have believed and accepted with joyful gladness, and with ennobling and most blissful results. But how do agnostics treat both Christ Himself and His testimony? They most of them (while ready to acknowledge that He was the wisest and the noblest of mankind) practically give Him the go-by, as if He were utterly unworthy of notice, and remain agnostics still. It is a most illogical and unworthy attitude to assume, but it is not difficult to account for it in measure. First of all, there is the natural enmity of the carnal mind and heart to God and everything spiritual (Rom. viii. 7). Then there is the slow *atrophy* of the higher powers of the mind, which naturally results from a steady and long-continued devotion to purely scientific pursuits, which Darwin not only experienced but also candidly acknowledged. There is also the subtle pride of intellect, which may consciously

or unconsciously be engendered by large discoveries of the marvels of Nature—a pride which could hardly have been greater in some had they *created* these marvels instead of merely *discovering* them. But along with all these hindrances to the acceptance of the Bible and Christianity, there has also been *the unnatural and unnecessary mystery which theology has thrown around the Christ*—a mystery so great that He has hardly seemed to be human at all. It is true that He was and is the supreme Miracle and the great Exception, and as such eternally mysterious; but He was also one with us in all things—sin excepted—that we might enter into oneness with Him; and of all beings that ever trod the earth He was the most truly brotherly. Now there are three things which ought to be persistently pressed upon the attention of agnostics. They are these: *first*, that God in Himself is the Great Unknown, as they believe, and as Jesus testified;

second, that the Son is the Revealer of the Father, and has truly made Him known to our race by Personal Manifestation from the beginning of time; and *third*, that to believe that He who was the *wisest* and *best* of men, and who, after being crucified, *rose from the dead* and *visibly ascended into the heavens*, could be either deceived or a deceiver, is irrational and absurd. A Scriptural Christology, and a true and simple Theology, will do much to meet and overcome the prevailing scepticism of the world, and bring all men—in grateful love and worshipful adoration—to the feet of the great Redeemer and Exemplar, to "crown Him Lord of all." Take also *the working men of England*, and consider their relation to this great matter. Many people—who know very little about them—suppose that, taken as a whole, they are totally indifferent to religion, or actively hostile to its teachings and claims. But this is a mistake. Thank God, there are thou-

sands, and hundreds of thousands, of the working class who have accepted Christ as their Saviour, and who now belong to that noble brotherhood of the new life concerning whom Jesus said, 'Ye are the salt of the earth.' They are living day by day simple, useful, honest lives (for no worker in any sphere can take Christ as his Master, and then scamp his work), and are adorning the gospel of God their Saviour by an upright walk and conversation becoming that gospel. But while we rejoice in this fact, we are sorrowfully bound to acknowledge that a very large number of our working people are neither lovers nor servants of Christ. "'Tis true, 'tis pity; pity 'tis, 'tis true"; for in refusing to follow Him they turn away from their best Friend, who could help and prosper and bless them more effectively and permanently than any one else can. There are many reasons why they are as they are, two or three of which we may mention. Apart from the sin-

fulness of the human heart, which is the root-reason of all infidelity and ungodliness, there are many other things which have kept them back from the receiving of Christ. For instance, they see that governments and parliaments, largely composed of professing Christian men, and a House of Lords, of which the Bishops are members, make many laws which seem to favour the rich rather than the poor, and throw a shield of protection over the liquor traffic, which year after year sends thousands of people to the drunkard's grave and to the drunkard's doom. If the words have any meaning, 'Woe unto him who holdeth the bottle to his neighbour's head,' what must be said of governments which open dram-shops by the thousands (not in the West-ends of our great cities, where the rich dwell, but) in the East-ends, where the poor huddle together in poverty and wretchedness, and who, alas! in the midst of their miseries are easily tempted to seek the temporary

forgetfulness or alleviation which strong drink can give? The shame of it is great, and the sin terrible. Oh, for the exhibition of that righteousness and true humanity which alone exalteth a nation! And then, when working men turn to the churches, they believe that if they went to them in the best clothes they have they would neither be cordially welcomed nor receive the same courtesy and attention which the more "respectable" obtain. In this we believe they are in large measure mistaken, and yet no one, we imagine, will venture to say that the strong words of the Apostle James are no longer needed in the churches—'Brethren, (ye) hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come into your assembly a man with a gold ring, in fine clothing, and there come in also a poor man in vile clothing; and ye have regard to him that weareth the fine clothing, and say, Sit thou here in a

good place; and ye say to the poor man, Stand thou there, or sit under my footstool; are ye not divided in your own mind, and become judges with evil thoughts?' (Jas. ii. 1–4). It is a fact that our working people as a whole are much more hostile to ministers and churches than they are to Christ and Christianity. One night a gentleman asked a gathering of working men in London this question, "Why do you dislike the parsons as a class, when you do not dislike their Master?" "They are not up to sample," was the prompt reply. "And why do you care so little for the churches?" he further inquired; and immediately the answer was given, "Because they care so little for us." Thank God, that is much less true to-day than it used to be; for in connection with almost every church of every denomination there is a mission of some kind to carry the gospel to all the people in the neighbourhood. There are many, many Christians

who have received enough of the Spirit of Christ to make them genial and gracious, tender and gentle, loving and kind, and of whose influence and action it may be truly said :—

> "They pluck a thorn from every breast,
> And plant a blossom there."

The Salvation Army is also doing a giant's work on behalf of the poor and neglected. Many large congregations in all our cities and towns are almost entirely composed of working people, and no healthier or more active churches are in existence. The people generally are coming to recognise the fact that genuine Christian pastors are their truest friends; and churches of all denominations are slowly apprehending the practical significance of Christ's words, 'To the poor the gospel is preached.' Better days are at hand. But along with these various hindrances there is also this—that Christ has been greatly misrepre-

sented to working men, as to others, *by the high-and-dry theology of the past.* It has put Him before them as an august and mysterious Being, who, though He descended from heaven to earth to live and die for humanity, was yet so great and wonderful that He seems to be not only 'separate from sinners,' but also far away from men. And what are the consequences? They have almost altogether given up the reading of Theology, and only think of Christ as a supernatural Mystery belonging to another world. Now *what was Jesus Christ?* He was not born in a palace, but in a stable. He was not cradled on a couch of gold, but in a manger. He was not brought up in Jerusalem among the rich and great, but in the despised village of Nazareth, and in the home of a carpenter. And when at length He came forth from His lowly obscurity and began His public ministry, He did not choose Scribes and Pharisees to be His disciples, but

humble fishermen of Galilee. He did not appear as the representative of any class in the nation, but was the Man of the people—'the Friend of publicans and sinners'—the Instructor of the ignorant—the Healer of the sick—the Comforter of the sorrowful—the Benefactor of all. His life has been truly and beautifully summed up in these words—'Who went about doing good.' He daily mingled with the multitudes as one of themselves, and always acted towards them all in the kindest, humblest, and most brotherly fashion—so much so, indeed, that while the representative men of the nation followed Him wherever He went with bitter hatred and scornful sneers, 'the people heard Him gladly.' But now all this is reversed. The scribes and pharisees of the nineteenth century praise and honour Him, and the people will not hear Him at all. There is something radically wrong somewhere, and we fear that a hard, Calvinistic, and metaphysical

theology must bear a large portion of the blame. Let theology be simplified and humanized, and the gospel preached to the great masses—not by so-called 'priests,' with their absurd and unscriptural pretensions, nor by clergy as a class, with all their caste-pride and stand-off dignity, nor by narrow sectaries who put their little isms on the forehead of the gospel, but by Christlike men and women who are true-hearted to God, loyal-hearted to Christ, warm-hearted to all their fellow-Christians, and tender-hearted to all their fellow-men, especially the worst—and then we shall no longer require to say or sing the profoundly pathetic and heart-stirring words of Ebenezer Elliott—

"When wilt Thou save the people?
O God of mercy, when?
The people, Lord, the people,
Not thrones and crowns, but men!

God save the people—Thine they are,
Thy children, as Thine angels fair ;
From vice, oppression, and despair,
God save the people. Amen."

6. *A true Christology, believed and taught by theologians and preachers, will be powerfully and practically effective in securing widespread Christian service and manifold spiritual results.* We could make this clearly evident by the right interpretation of many Christological Scriptures, but we shall confine our remarks to *one passage only*, which may properly be regarded as the most noteworthy of them all. We refer to Philippians ii. 5–8 : 'Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who being originally in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men ; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself,

becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.' The one lesson generally drawn from these wonderful words *is the lesson of humility.* Bishop Lightfoot says, "Reflect in your own minds the mind of Christ Jesus: be humble, as He also was humble." But they teach a far greater and grander lesson than that when the real nature of Christ is truly apprehended, viz., this, *That we ought to manifest humility* AS HE MANIFESTED IT *when He became Incarnate.* Had the Incarnation been a descent of the Divine Son into humanity—God becoming Man—as is generally believed, it could not have been imitated by Christians except by the cherishing and manifesting of the spirit of humility; but it was the coming down of the God-Man into 'flesh'; and that was a descent *which can be literally followed* by every believer in the Saviour. Consider the matter. A Christian is a spiritual man; he has 'passed from

death unto life' (John v. 24). The life which Jesus came to give has been quickened within him, and that life is the life of God. Having received the true life and become a possessor of the Holy Ghost, he is able and Divinely expected *to do just what Christ did,—to descend from the spiritual plane of human life into the flesh-and-blood condition of his unsaved brethren*, and by *incarnating* himself in their low estate —through fellowship, sympathy, and service—to 'seek and save the lost.' He is to walk in the downward path of sorrow and suffering until he reaches the Calvary of a voluntary and perfect sacrifice of self, from whence he too will ascend as Christ did to the throne of honour and glory, there to become an eternal partaker of His reward and joy: 'Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of the Majesty on high' (Heb. xii. 2). It is

still true that "the way of the cross is the road to the crown." The downward path of incarnation and crucifixion leads to the upward path of resurrection, ascension, and glorification to all the faithful followers of Christ, as it did to Christ Himself. 'This is the way; walk ye in it'—'Follow Me' is His great and gracious command, a command which is being loyally obeyed by multitudes of those who trust and love Him. The downward path is now being trodden by thousands and thousands of consecrated men and women all over Christendom; and the number, we believe, will be greatly increased when God's great appeal through Paul, in Philippians ii. 5–8, is rightly understood by His people. They have often listened to appeals to become '*crucified* with Christ,' and to rise with Him into the *Resurrection* life, and to live the life of *Ascension* by seeking the things which are above, where Christ is; but, rightly understood, this is the

most powerful appeal of all—an appeal which includes all the others — an appeal which is yet destined, we trust, to thrill and inspire and nerve with holy courage and divinest enthusiasm the hearts of millions. 'If we suffer with Him, we shall also be glorified together' (Rom. viii. 17). 'Behold, I come quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to each man according as his *work* is' (Rev. xxii. 12).

"In vain the *name* of Christ we bear,
Unless the *cross* of Christ we share;
The path that leads us to the skies
Demands Love's perfect sacrifice.

"The great occasion never ends
While sorrow's cry to God ascends;
And Love transforms Life's rugged way
Into a new Thermopylæ."

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